Out of Afghanistan

The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal

Diego Cordovez
Selig S. Harrison

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SELIG S. HARRISON

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PREFACE

This book is the product of an unusual intellectual partnership between an insider and an outsider. One of the authors is a diplomatic practitioner, the former Undersecretary General of the United Nations who negotiated the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The other is a longtime foreign correspondent and South Asia specialist who closely monitored the six-year U.N. mediation effort, analyzing and often criticizing what the U.N. and the governments concerned were doing in Op Ed articles and in journals. On more than forty occasions between 1982 and 1988, we met to exchange views and compare notes on the progress of the war, the latest political developments in Moscow, Washington, Kabul, and Islamabad, and the tortuous twists and turns of the U.N. negotiations.

The format we have chosen is deliberately designed to emphasize our differing roles and the multifaceted character of the story that we tell. For each period of the narrative, we have written separate and independent companion chapters in which a personal memoir of the U.N. diplomatic effort is preceded by an account of the war and of the policy struggles in the concerned capitals that surrounded the U.N. process.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the many colleagues and friends who encouraged us to write this book and helped us in our effort to establish an unimpeachable historical record. Most of this account is based on our firsthand experience and observation. In many cases, we have attributed information and quotations to specific individuals and sources. However, we have also relied heavily on the confidential help of numerous present and former officials of the governments concerned whose identities cannot be disclosed.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for sponsoring a Study Group on "War and Peace in Afghanistan" under our chairmanship that brought together many of the key actors in our story. The four meetings of the Study Group on June 9 and 12 and November 14, 1989, and February 6, 1990, stimulated and enriched the early stages of our research.

Most of the translation of Russian-language materials was done by Soviet specialist Paul Saunders.

Among the many scholars and journalists in Washington, Moscow, London, Paris, and Islamabad who shared their insights and information, we would like to mention Don Oberdorfer, former diplomatic correspondent of the *Washington Post,* who suggested the title of this book, and Raymond L. Garthoff of the Brookings Institution. Finally, we would like to thank the Afghans of all political persuasions to whom we owe our understanding of the historical, cultural and social context of the events discussed in these pages.

Quito D. C.
Washington, D.C. S. S. H.
February 1995

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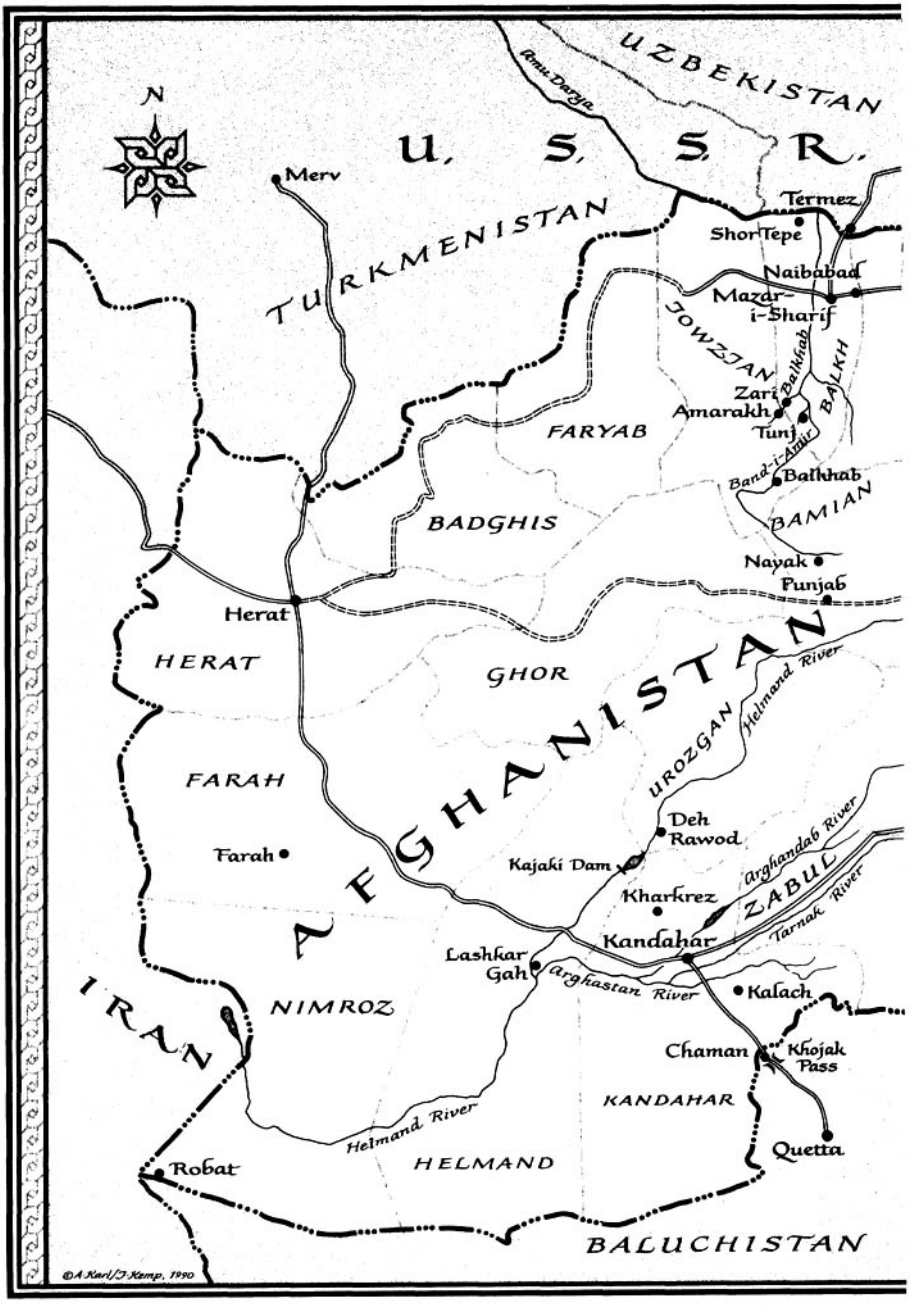
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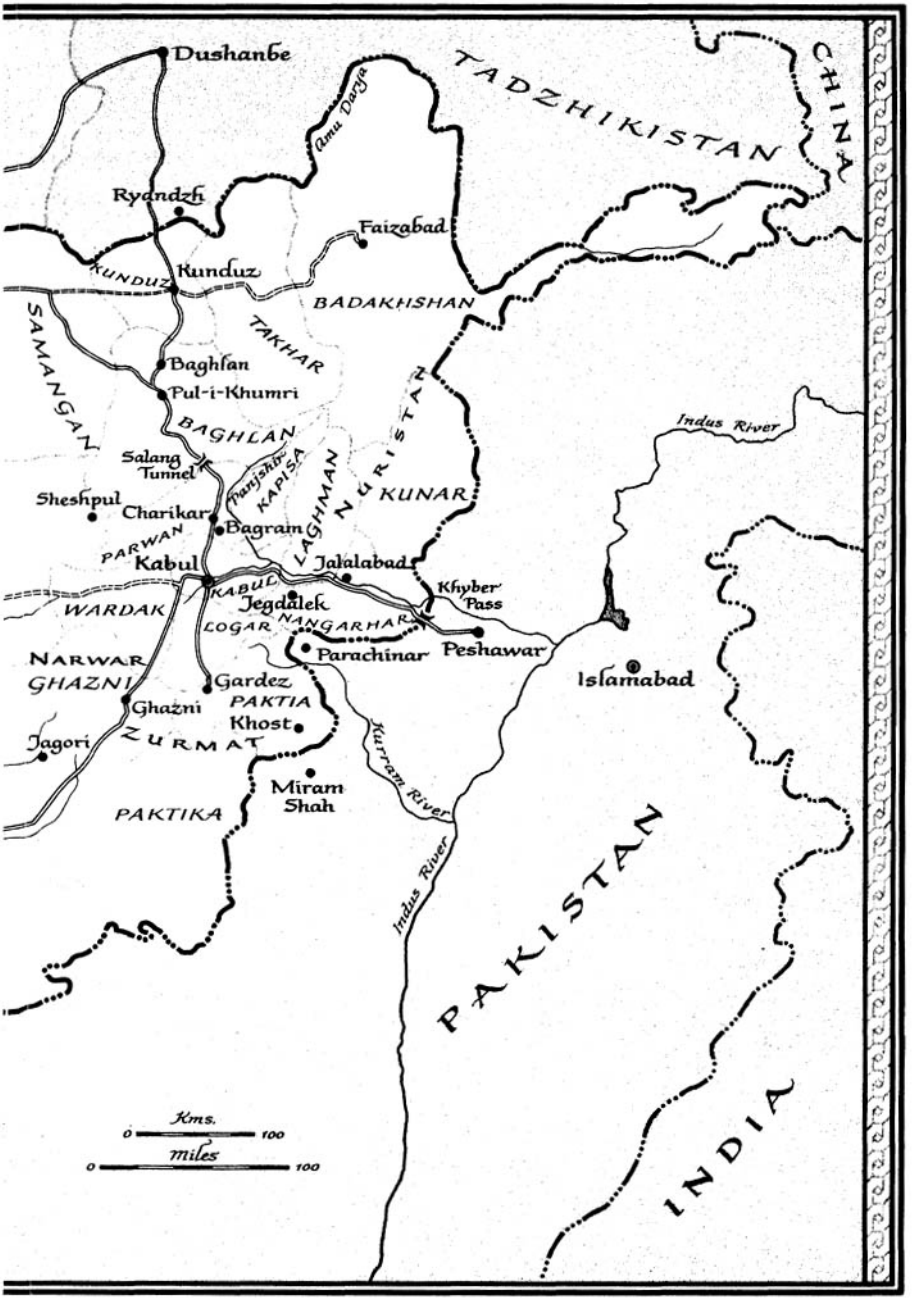
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Out of Afghanistan

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OVERVIEW

AFGHANISTAN AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Diego Cordovez
Selig S. Harrison

Historians debating why and how the Cold War ended have divided into two warring camps.

On one side are those who argue that the West prevailed through four decades of geopolitical containment and military deterrence, culminating in the American military buildup during the presidency of Ronald Reagan and in the stepped-up support for anti-Communist insurgencies proclaimed in the Reagan Doctrine. Many proponents of this view attribute the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan primarily to American military pressure, with a passing nod to the bravery of the Afghan resistance. Carried to its extreme, this interpretation gives the CIA's covert operation in Afghanistan credit not only for ending the Cold War but also for bringing about the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Arrayed against this dominant school of thought are George Kennan and like-minded Soviet specialists who emphasize the profound changes that were taking place within Soviet society during the Cold War, the failure of the ossified Communist system to respond to these changes, and the resultant emergence of new leaders committed to domestic reform and retrenchment abroad. Containment, deterrence, and military pressure, in this view, were necessary to hold Soviet power in check but had relatively little to do with the reversal of Soviet policies initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, including the withdrawal from Af-

ghanistan. Indeed, Kennan has declared that "the general effect of cold war extremism was to delay rather than hasten the great change that overtook the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s."[1]

The Kennan position, which this book supports, is solidly grounded in extensive historical studies that were largely ignored amid the polemics of the Cold War years.[2] Viewed in the perspective of this research, *perestroika* came as the climax of a protracted process of political change that had been building up for decades in response to the economic dislocations and social tensions created by rapid urbanization and industrialization. In Lenin's day, only 16 percent of the Soviet populace lived in cities; by 1960, that figure had more than tripled. Between 1950 and 1984 the number of students enrolled in universities jumped from 1.2 million to 5.3 million, spawning a new elite of technocrats with middle-class values and attitudes. Nikita Khrushchev was the first Soviet leader to respond to the pressures building up from below for a more resilient and adaptive political system. His de-Stalinization attempts were blocked but not reversed. Similarly, although Alexei Kosygin's economic reforms during the 1960s failed, his concept of a "socialist market" was never repudiated. The ailing Yuri Andropov, during his brief tenure in office, failed to consolidate his control but was sensitive to the turbulence beneath the surface and consciously paved the way for Gorbachev.

As Martin Walker has observed, "Mikhail Gorbachev did not come out of nowhere. He was a product of the surging growth in Soviet education and in new professions, and of the new social mix that resulted . . . of booming black markets, changing lifestyles, new class divisions and new social expectations. . . . The country went through a social revolution while Brezhnev slept."[3]

Just as Brezhnev's decision to invade Afghanistan was one of the last spasms of a dying Stalinist old guard, so the withdrawal marked the triumphant emergence of a new generation of leadership. The account that follows puts the last decade of the Cold War in a new light by showing the importance of *perestroika*—and diplomacy—in bringing about a withdrawal often explained almost entirely in terms of military pressure.

At the same time, this account makes clear that Soviet objectives in Afghanistan were limited from the start. Moscow did not launch its invasion as the first step in a master plan to dominate the Persian Gulf, as most observers believed at the time. Rather, after stumbling into a morass of Afghan political factionalism, the Soviet Union resorted to military force in a last desperate effort to forestall what it perceived as the threat of an American-supported Afghan Tito on its borders. Differences surfaced soon thereafter within the Soviet leadership over the wisdom of this decision, leading as early as 1983 to serious probes for a way out that were rejected by an American leadership bent on exploiting Soviet discomfiture. The advent of Gorbachev in 1985 immediately resulted in the intensified pursuit of a settlement more than eighteen months before the introduction of the Stinger missile often credited with bringing him to the bargaining table.

Despite the widespread stereotype of a Soviet military defeat, Soviet forces were securely entrenched in Afghanistan when the Geneva Accords were finally

signed on April 14, 1988. The Red Army did not withdraw in the wake of a Waterloo or a Dien Bien Phu. Confronted by a military and political stalemate, Gorbachev decided to disengage because the accords offered a pragmatic way to escape from the growing costs of the deadlock and to open the way for improved relations with the West. *Perestroika* was the indispensable prerequisite for the withdrawal, and diplomacy, reinforced by military pressure, made it happen.

To say that the Afghan war brought the Soviet Union to its knees and led to the unraveling of the Soviet system, as some observers do,[4] turns reality on its head. It was precisely because Andropov and Gorbachev recognized the shortcomings of the Soviet system that they began to question the relevance of the Soviet model for other countries, notably Afghanistan, and to search for a way to disengage. What was happening in the Soviet Union itself led to a new way of looking at Soviet domestic priorities and to "new thinking" in foreign policy. Disengagement from Afghanistan was the logical first step. The sudden breakdown of the Soviet state three years later and the overthrow of Gorbachev resulted from his inability to keep pace with the accelerated pressures for change that his own reforms had generated, especially pressures from the non-Russian republics for a looser confederation than he had envisaged. To be sure, the Afghan debacle contributed to the psychological malaise that made the unraveling of 1991 possible. But *perestroika* and the dissolution of the Soviet state were both part of the same historical continuum of domestic social and economic transformation. Our analysis goes far to validate the view that the Cold War would have continued to wind down even if the 1991 collapse had not occurred.[5]

The record presented here modifies and in some cases destroys altogether many of the distorted images of the Afghan war years fostered by the disinformation that emanated from the Soviet Union, the United States, Pakistan, and the contending Afghan antagonists.

In place of the stereotype of a monolithic Soviet leadership bent on expansion, Part I reveals that an agonizing internal debate over whether to intervene raged beginning in March 1979. Politburo minutes reveal that the same leaders who decided on intervention in December were keenly aware of its hazards nine months earlier. New evidence presented here underlines the bitter turf warfare that raged between rival Soviet intelligence agencies over how to salvage a faction-ridden Afghan Communist regime and, in particular, over which Afghans to support. This internecine conflict enabled Afghan Communist leader Babrak Karmal to feed Soviet fears of American links with his rival, Hafizullah Amin, thus tipping the scales in the Soviet debate in favor of intervention. Significant differences also existed within the Soviet military establishment. While party commissars in the armed forces favored intervention, the General Staff was more cautious, urging that Soviet forces be used only to secure cities and key installations, with combat operations left to the Afghan Army. Memoirs by Soviet generals and Afghan resistance leaders alike show that the Red Army did initially attempt to remain in its garrisons but was drawn into combat by increasingly frequent resistance offensives.

Similarly, the stereotype of a benign American commitment to peace and

Afghan self-determination masked a more complex reality. The United States government was itself divided from the start between "bleeders," who wanted to keep Soviet forces pinned down in Afghanistan and thus to avenge Vietnam, and "dealers," who wanted to compel their withdrawal through a combination of diplomacy and military pressure. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance proposed to President Jimmy Carter that the United States offer to neutralize Iran and Pakistan in exchange for a Soviet withdrawal. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski was able to kill the idea in one of the least-noticed but most important of his many clashes with Vance. Brzezinski wanted the Soviet Union to be cast in the role of defendant before the court of world public opinion. For this reason, Moscow consistently sought to avoid U.S.-Soviet negotiations on Afghanistan, while agreeing as early as 1980 to accept United Nations mediation that would nominally be between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with Moscow and Washington in the background.

As Part II shows, the United States did its best to prevent the emergence of a U.N. role, actively working to replace Pakistani leaders who sought an Afghan peace settlement with others who were ready for a Pakistani role as a conduit for aid to the Afghan resistance. Once the U.N. process started, Washington gave nominal support to the negotiations but refused to become even superficially involved. Gorbachev's emergence encouraged the "dealers" in Washington to work for greater U.S. cooperation with the U.N. diplomatic effort that is the focus of this book. But the "bleeders" fought against the Geneva Accords until the very end, arguing unsuccessfully that the United States should insist on the replacement of the Afghan Communist regime as a condition for signing the agreement.

Could the withdrawal have come sooner?

Part III shows that Andropov's overtures for negotiations in 1983 were serious. However, he faced significant opposition from Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov, and the Afghan Communist leader Karmal, who were strengthened by Reagan's "evil empire" speech in March and the negative American attitude toward the Geneva negotiations. Pakistani opponents of a settlement were also bolstered by the American stand. A positive American posture would have enabled Andropov to move more aggressively, though it is open to debate, given his failing health, whether he could have followed his initiative through to a conclusion.

Gorbachev, too, could have overcome the opposition to disengagement in Moscow and Kabul much more rapidly with American help. The Reagan Administration was slow to recognize that he wanted to disengage and divided over whether to push the U.N. mediation effort. Parts IV and V suggest that Moscow, for its part, might have been ready for a withdrawal in late 1985 and was in all likelihood ready soon after the Reykjavik summit in late 1986. It was in January 1987 that Moscow made its first offer to specify a withdrawal timetable in exchange for U.S. support of a coalition in Kabul with Communist participation, an offer rejected out of hand by Secretary of State George Shultz.

As Part VI elaborates, the withdrawal was delayed primarily by disagreement over who would rule in Kabul after Soviet forces left. The war could have

ended sooner than it did, but only if Moscow or Washington or both had been willing to break loose from its Afghan clients as part of a cooperative shift to a broad-based coalition regime. Neither the Afghan Communist Party nor Pakistan-sponsored Islamic fundamentalist elements of the resistance represented the unorganized majority of Afghans. Afghan leaders did create a representative resistance coalition—the Loi Jirga movement of 1980—but Pakistani intelligence agencies killed this promising indigenous initiative. Pursuing its own historically rooted objectives, Islamabad insisted on channeling the lion's share of U.S. aid to fundamentalist-dominated resistance groups as the price for its role as a conduit. The United States paid the piper but did not call the tune. American acquiescence in the Pakistani demand for a fundamentalist-dominated government in Kabul with no Communist representation strengthened those in Moscow who believed that only a Communist-led regime could survive for the "decent interval" desired after Soviet forces left.

The U.N. mediation effort was addressed solely to achieving a negotiated solution to the international aspects of the Afghan conflict. The promotion of a coalition government was beyond its formal mandate. Indeed, U.N. member states resist what they consider intrusions into their internal affairs. Nevertheless, when the U.N. concluded that the parties concerned were unwilling or unable to establish a broad-based Afghan government, the U.N. decided to bend its own rules and made two proposals for a political solution in Kabul that were largely ignored by the superpowers.

Although the regime of Najibullah* did in fact survive for four years, the end result of the Soviet-American failure to cooperate with the U.N. in establishing a coalition regime has been continued bloodshed in Kabul and the emergence of well-armed fundamentalist forces in a society traditionally hostile to fundamentalist dogma. Moreover, the fact that the United States tolerated or was unable to stop Islamabad's support of fundamentalist factions has had ugly consequences. The CIA inadvertently colluded in the training of fundamentalist zealots from a variety of Islamic countries who have been implicated in terrorism against the World Trade Center and other Western and even Islamic targets.

The chaos that followed Najibullah's ouster was foreordained by the American and Soviet attitude toward the key military aid provisions of the Geneva Accords. After an interval in which the accords were respected, both sides blatantly violated the central philosophy and intention of the settlement: that once concluded it should lead to international disengagement from Afghanistan in all essential respects. In December 1985 the Reagan Administration accepted the prohibition on military aid to the resistance in Article Two, Section Eight of the accords, only to renege on this commitment at the eleventh hour. Washington objected to the fact that the accords made no reference to whether the Soviet Union could or could not provide military support to the Kabul regime. The reason for this asymmetry is explained by Yaqub Khan, Pakistan's principal negotiator during the first five years of the Geneva negotiations. Yaqub points out in an interview recounted in Part VI that the Democratic Republic

* Najibullah uses only one name.

of Afghanistan, as an accredited Member State of the United Nations, had a legal status basically different from that of the resistance groups, a status reflected in the fact that it was a party to the accords.

We share Yaqub's conviction that the chances for postwar stability in Afghanistan would have been greatly enhanced if the United States and Pakistan had lived up to their commitments. At the same time, it is most regrettable that Gorbachev and his advisers adopted a posture on the military aid issue that conflicted with their own earlier stand. Soviet negotiators had stated on numerous occasions during the U.N. mediation process that Moscow would not need to resupply Kabul with military assistance if the U.S. stopped its aid. Nevertheless, it was Moscow that provoked the "symmetry" controversy in early 1988 by stating that it reserved the right to continue its military aid to Kabul after the completion of the withdrawal. When Secretary of State Shultz made a proposal for "negative symmetry" that envisaged an arms aid moratorium by both sides, Moscow balked. Shultz then reached a secret agreement on "positive symmetry" with Moscow and declared that the U.S. reserved its right to continue aid. The Reagan Administration also reached a cynical understanding with Pakistan: If the Soviets continued to supply military assistance to Kabul, Islamabad could violate the accords. Less than two years later, after Moscow and Washington had poured in substantial new inputs of weaponry, the Soviet Union did agree belatedly to "negative symmetry."

Defenders of "positive symmetry" argue that it reflected inescapable political realities in Washington and Moscow and was the unavoidable price for the withdrawal. Whether or not one accepts this judgment, it should be recognized that equally inescapable political realities made an asymmetrical approach on the critical military aid issue necessary in order to entice the Soviet Union into negotiating a withdrawal. Moscow was drawn into serious participation in the Geneva negotiations only because the initial draft of the accords envisaged an end to U.S. military aid. Once Pakistan and later the United States accepted this approach, Moscow became enmeshed in a spider web of commitments to the accords as a whole. By the time the United States "moved the goalposts" in early 1988, Gorbachev had publicly pledged to withdraw by May 15.

In the end, despite the U.S. shift, the accords offered Moscow a much better way out than a unilateral withdrawal because they conferred international recognition on the continuance of the Kabul regime. It was this central face-saving feature of the accords that made the withdrawal possible. Ironically, the United States was willing to let the regime remain in place only because it assumed that Najibullah would quickly be overthrown.

Some observers have suggested that the Soviet Union would eventually have withdrawn, in any case, even without a Geneva agreement. In the absence of the accords, however, Moscow would have been free to make a partial withdrawal, keeping a significant residual force in Afghanistan to guard Kabul and other key centers. It would have been an incomplete, uncertain, and reversible process, subject to political pressures from Najibullah and his allies in the Kremlin. Part VI reveals that in April 1988, shortly before the conclusion of the accords, Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze and KGB chief Vladimir Khrychkov

did, in fact, press for a revision of the 1978 Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty that would have permitted the return of Soviet troops to Afghanistan under certain circumstances. Gorbachev rebuffed this initiative as well as three subsequent attempts to circumvent the accords by introducing new Soviet forces in Afghanistan both during and after the withdrawal.

Given Moscow's desire not to be cast in the role of defendant at the bar, the United Nations was uniquely placed to play its critical role in negotiating the withdrawal. As this account shows, however, the U.N. effort succeeded because the Secretary General's mediation mandate was implemented with a degree of flexibility unprecedented in U.N. annals. In effect, the mediation process became a negotiating process. When Pakistan refused face-to-face talks, the format of "proximity talks" in adjacent rooms was systematically utilized to permit rapid interchange. "Notes for the Record," a device not hitherto used in U.N. mediation, evolved into the building blocks of the agreed text that eventually emerged. More important, the twelve rounds of formal diplomatic interchange conducted in Geneva over a six-year period were nurtured by a sustained indirect negotiating process carried out through shuttle diplomacy. The process became a mutually reinforcing network of bilateral negotiations between the U.N. and each of the four governments directly concerned, as well as with other governments and unofficial personalities in a position to influence the negotiations.

A remarkable characteristic of the Cold War period was that each superpower tacitly acknowledged the supremacy of the other in its own sphere of influence. Open intervention by the United States in Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1961), and even the U.S. armed invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, produced only mild verbal reactions from Moscow. Similarly, the Soviet interventions in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), and Czechoslovakia (1968) had no significant reactions in Washington. Only three weeks after the Czech invasion President Johnson declared in a speech his hope that the "setback" would only be "very temporary." A corollary of this implicit understanding was that the U.N. was consistently prevented from playing but a marginal role in such situations, usually confined to rhetorical admonitions and pious requests by the General Assembly or the Security Council to end the offensive actions. Both sides rebuffed repeated attempts by two successive Secretaries General to mediate in the Vietnam war.

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan the reaction in the West was unprecedented and the U.N. was therefore able to play an unprecedented mediation role between the superpowers. In the Cuban missile crisis, the U.N. played a brief and marginal intermediary role, but in the Afghan case the U.N. was the major channel for resolving the conflict from beginning to end. As part of its mediation effort the U.N. prodded Washington and Moscow in turn to make concessions that seemed marginal to each at the time but that served cumulatively to build irresistible momentum. The most conspicuous case in point was the announcement by the United States in December 1985 that it would join with the Soviet Union in guaranteeing the U.N. agreement then emerging if it contained a satisfactory withdrawal timetable. Part IV shows that the "bleeders" in the Reagan Administration saw no chance of a Soviet withdrawal and went along

with the U.S. commitment to be a guarantor solely as a psychological warfare gambit against Moscow.

This account points up repeatedly the impact of the Geneva negotiations on the internal policy struggles over Afghanistan not only in Washington and Moscow but also in Kabul and Islamabad. With more diverse information sources and greater psychological and intellectual receptivity, the U.N. from the start was more sensitive than the cold warriors in Western capitals and Islamabad to the changes simmering beneath the surface in Moscow. By fashioning an agreement tolerable to Soviet hawks, the U.N. consciously promoted the process of reappraisal that began during the Andropov years and was to come to its climax after the advent of Gorbachev. Similarly, the U.N. negotiations gradually strengthened the "dealers" in Washington and Islamabad who were prepared to facilitate a withdrawal as part of a broader improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations.

The central theme emerging from this book is that the Cold War world was dominated by the superpower rivalry but not by the superpowers. Moscow and Washington saw themselves as the puppeteers pulling the strings. More often than not, however, they were manipulated by clients who had their own agendas. Rival Afghan Communist leaders viewed the Soviet Union as a vehicle for promoting parochial goals and personal ambitions. Sensitive to Moscow's internecine divisions, they fought their battles against each other with the aid of contending Soviet factions. Similarly, Mohammed Zia Ul Haq and his fellow generals in Pakistan were quick to recognize that the Soviet invasion could be utilized to get military aid from the United States. Playing the role of a "front line state" enabled them to strengthen the domestic power position of their military regime and to improve Pakistan's balance of power with India. Islamabad bargained skillfully, periodically demanding upgraded military aid as the price for its cooperation with the CIA in Afghanistan. The Pakistan-sponsored factions of the Afghan resistance were also pursuing their own objectives, stockpiling vast quantities of armament during the war years for use in postwar Afghan power struggles.

Although both superpowers invoked noble objectives, both treated Afghanistan in reality as a pawn in their global struggle. Historians will properly point the finger of guilt at the Soviet Union for its unprecedented violation of international norms and its contemptible brutality in the prosecution of the conflict. The fortitude of the *mujahideen* understandably inspired American and other international support for their cause. For much of the war, however, American policy amounted to "fighting to the last Afghan" because the United States failed to couple its support for the *mujahideen* with support for the U.N. peace effort. Blinded by its distrust of Moscow, Washington distrusted the United Nations as well. Thus, while Moscow is the villain, there are no heroes, except for the silent majority of Afghans who survived the horrors of the war years and are now left to rebuild their ravaged land with little help or sympathy from a world that has forgotten them.

I

1973–1979

THE ROAD TO INTERVENTION

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1

HOW THE SOVIET UNION STUMBLED INTO AFGHANISTAN

Selig S. Harrison

When the Red Army invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the conventional wisdom was that Soviet forces would eventually move onward to their real target: the Persian Gulf oil fields. Most analysts ignored or discounted what had been happening in Afghanistan itself during the months and years leading up to the invasion.

Accumulating historical evidence now makes clear that the Soviet Union was not pursuing a master plan of regional expansion. To be sure, Soviet policy in Afghanistan became progressively more doctrinaire and more adventurous during the last years of Leonid Brezhnev; after tolerating a Soviet-tilted brand of nonalignment there for more than two decades, Moscow suddenly began to prepare for a Communist revolution. But Afghan political developments propelled Brezhnev and his advisers on their course much faster than they had anticipated or programmed, in ways they were unable to control, and with undesired results they did not envisage.

The timing of the 1978 revolution was decided not by Moscow but by local Communist leaders. The Afghan Communists who emerged in control of the new regime were not the KGB's* trusted Afghan protégés. After backing the loser in an internecine Afghan Communist power struggle, Brezhnev mistakenly viewed the alienated victor, Hafizullah Amin, as a potential Tito who was plotting with the United States, Pakistan, and China to establish an anti-Soviet regime.

**Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti,* or Committee for State Security.

Exit the King, Enter the Superpowers

The story behind the invasion begins in Kabul with a Byzantine sequence of murderous Afghan intrigue, complicated by turf wars between rival Soviet intelligence agencies and the undercover manipulations of agents for seven contending foreign powers. It reaches its climax when Brezhnev, ailing and alcoholic, pushes through the decision to invade in secrecy without calling a full meeting of his Politburo, disregarding the opposition of three key generals in his Army General Staff.

The precipitating event that ultimately led to Moscow's monumental blunder six years later was the overthrow of former King Zahir Shah in 1973 by his jealous cousin, Mohammed Daoud. Feuds within the ruling elite and Daoud's own driving ambition were the primary factors behind the coup. The thesis that he acted at the behest of Moscow has been discredited. Although Daoud seized power with help from a group of rebellious, Soviet-trained military officers with ties to GRU,* the Soviet military intelligence agency, subsequent events showed that he saw them as expedient, temporary allies who could easily be controlled and discarded when convenient.[1]

To some extent, external factors did precipitate the coup, but these related primarily to the deep-rooted traditional animosities between Afghanistan and neighboring Iran and Pakistan. Daoud was a militant nationalist who believed that the King had betrayed Afghan interests by agreeing to a treaty giving Iran extensive access to the waters of the Helmand River, especially during a period of prolonged drought in Afghanistan. This bitterly controversial decision coincided with growing dissatisfaction among Afghanistan's Pushtun ethnic majority over the King's failure to retaliate against Islamabad for its repression of Pushtun and Baluch ethnic minorities in Pakistan.

In the ninetheenth century, the British Raj had conquered vast Pushtun and Baluch areas that were then part of Afghanistan, unilaterally imposing a boundary, known as the Durand Line, that defined the de facto limits of Afghan territory. Later, these conquered areas were handed over to Pakistan when it was created in 1947. Daoud had long spearheaded Afghan irredentist demands for an independent, Afghan-linked "Pushtunistan" and a more ambiguously defined Baluch state linking Baluch areas in Pakistan and Iran with a small strip of adjacent Baluch territory in Afghanistan. The King's cautious response to growing Pakistani provocations against both Pushtun and Baluch tribesmen during early 1973 provided a powerful rationale for Daoud's takeover.

The coup created an unprecedented political vacuum in Kabul, where the monarchy had traditionally provided the only focus of legitimate authority for a society divided along tribal, ethnic, and religious lines. Moreover, it abruptly upset the uneasy equilibrium between the West and the Soviet Union that had prevailed in Afghanistan throughout the Cold War.

In their nineteenth-century "great game" with Britain, the czars had attempted to annex northern Afghanistan, and the Soviet regime, since its in-

* *Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye* or Main Intelligence Directorate.

ception in 1919, had consistently displayed a proprietary attitude toward the country. Prior to 1973, however, Moscow had kept up correct relations with nonaligned Afghan conservative governments so long as their nonalignment had a Soviet tilt. The Soviet Union had put the goal of a Communist Afghanistan on a back burner while making quiet efforts to strengthen pro-Soviet forces.

With an eye to the future, the GRU had encouraged Soviet-trained officers to form the underground Armed Forces Revolutionary Organization in September 1964.[2] It was this group that backed Daoud in 1973. Similarly, when the King announced that Afghanistan's first free elections would be held in August 1965, Moscow had urged the perennially feuding Parcham (Red Banner) and Khalq (Masses) factions to form a unified Communist Party. Soviet support helped the newly formed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to win three of the five National Assembly seats in Kabul in the election. As soon as the voting was over, however, Moscow, anxious to avoid ruffling the King's feathers, had left the Communists to fend for themselves.

The United States and its regional allies, for their part, had accepted Afghanistan's Soviet tilt during the monarchy as an unavoidable fact of life reflecting its vulnerable, landlocked position. Once Daoud ousted the King and established his shaky new republic, however, Kabul rapidly became a Cold War political battleground. As factionalism, corruption, and political uncertainty grew, externally backed forces began to jockey for position in preparation for the power struggle expected to follow the elderly Daoud's death.

On the left, Moscow increased its support to the Parcham Communists led by Babrak Karmal, long the Soviet Union's favorite among Afghan Communist leaders. The Parchamites formed a coalition government with Daoud at Moscow's behest and made an undisguised effort to increase their influence in the Afghan bureaucracy and military. Significantly, the rival Khalqis, led by Noor Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, refused to back the new regime, arguing that Daoud's domestic policies were too conservative to merit Communist support. Nevertheless, even though a large section of the Communist movement remained outside the government, the rapid growth of Parchamite power alarmed conservative elements in Kabul and in neighboring capitals, especially Teheran.

By a fateful historical coincidence, it was in the early 1970's, with oil prices rising, that Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran embarked on his ambitious effort to roll back Soviet influence in neighboring countries and create a modern version of the ancient Persian empire. Until the eighteenth century, Iran had ruled western Afghanistan, and the fall of Zahir Shah revived Iranian ambitions. Beginning in 1974, the Shah launched a determined effort to draw Kabul into a Western-tilted, Teheran-centered regional economic and security sphere embracing India, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf states.

The United States actively encouraged this rollback policy as part of its broad partnership with the Shah in the economic and military aid spheres as well as in covert action throughout Southwest Asia. Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has frankly recalled his deep suspicions of Daoud as a witting or unwitting Soviet surrogate.[3] However, Kissinger and other key U. S. officials

involved contend that they were not seeking a pro-West tilt but rather a more genuine nonalignment in place of what had been a pro-Soviet orientation. In particular, they emphasize that they were not working to establish a military aid relationship with Kabul.

The most visible results of the Iranian campaign came in the economic and cultural arenas. Teheran extended a $40 million credit to Kabul on easy terms in 1974 as the first installment in a $2 billion, ten-year economic aid program. Iran was scheduled to replace the Soviet Union as Kabul's biggest aid donor, and a projected rail and highway network linking Afghanistan to Persian Gulf ports would have largely canceled out Afghan dependence on Soviet trade and transport outlets. An informal co-prosperity sphere began to develop, with Afghan workers moving freely back and forth across the border to work in Iranian development projects. Teheran Radio stepped up its broadcasts in Dari, the Afghan variant of Persian, and Iranian publications flooded the Afghan market.

Among the less visible, subterranean aspects of the Shah's offensive was expanded activity by his intelligence agency, Savak, which attempted to challenge the well-established KGB. Covert operatives from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, China, and a variety of Persian Gulf and Middle Eastern countries also filtered into the Afghan capital during the years after 1973. The Iranian role was first authoritatively described to me in 1975 by Fereydoun Hoveyda, the Iranian representative at the United Nations, who pointed to it proudly as an example of Iranian-American cooperation. Later, I learned more about Kabul's intelligence networks and rivalries on visits there and in other regional capitals.

Savak and the CIA worked hand in hand, sometimes in loose collaboration with underground Afghan Islamic fundamentalist groups that shared their anti-Soviet objectives but had their own agendas as well. The Afghan fundamentalists were closely linked, in turn, to the Cairo-based Ikhwan ul-Musulmeen (Muslim Brotherhood) and the Rabitat-al-Alam-al-Islami (Muslim World League), a leading exponent of Saudi Wahabi orthodoxy. As oil profits skyrocketed, emissaries from these newly affluent Arab fundamentalist groups arrived on the Afghan scene with bulging bankrolls. Like Savak, they hired informers who attempted to identify Communist sympathizers throughout the Afghan government and armed forces.

On the one hand, Teheran used its aid leverage to press Daoud for the removal of suspected Communists. At the same time, Savak channeled U.S. weapons, communications equipment, and other paramilitary aid to anti-Daoud groups.[4] Some of this assistance was given directly by Iran to tribal dissidents operating in adjacent western Afghanistan; some was channeled through Pakistan to the underground fundamentalist groups.[5] Pakistani harassment of Daoud reached its climax in a series of Islamabad-orchestrated raids on police posts in the Pansjer valley. Savak, the CIA, and Pakistani agents were also involved in the abortive, fundamentalist-backed coup attempts against Daoud in September and December 1973 and June 1974.

The KGB, the GRU, and the Afghan Communists

Whether Daoud would have moved to the right as rapidly as he did in the absence of external pressures and inducements is debatable. In any case, within a year after taking power, he did begin to alter the coloration of his government. In July 1974 he removed two hundred Soviet-trained officers. In September he downgraded one of the leading Communists in his cabinet by sending him on an ambassadorial assignment. In mid-1975, he replaced the Communist Interior Minister with a hard-line military man, General Kadir Nuristani, who vocally advocated cracking down on Communist influence. In October 1975 Daoud dismissed forty additional Soviet-trained military officers from the armed services. At the same time he moved to reduce future Afghan dependence on officer training in the Soviet Union by initiating training arrangements with India, Egypt, and, to a lesser extent, the United States.

A significant but little noticed indicator of Daoud's shifting posture came in November 1975 when he began to retreat on the sensitive nationalist issues of the Helmand waters and "Pushtunistan." After justifying his seizure of power just two years earlier as necessary to thwart an unequal Helmand treaty, he indicated his intention to ratify the treaty after all. Then, in response to overt Pakistani pressure, he served notice that Afghanistan would no longer be a haven for Pushtun and Baluch insurgents fighting against the Pakistani regime of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. While refusing to oust more than ten thousand tribesmen who were already using Afghanistan as a base for guerrilla operations, he outraged nationalist elements by denying entry to new refugees fleeing from the Pakistan Army.

Daoud's most fateful move was his formal rupture with the Parcham Communists. Announcing that he would start his own National Revolutionary Front and would ban all other political activity under a new one-party constitution, he called for dissolution of the Parcham and Khalq organizations and demanded that all Communists join his new party. When Daoud reshuffled his cabinet in early December, ousting the few remaining leftist members, Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny promptly visited Kabul to register mounting Soviet concern.

Daoud's decision to break with the Parchamites, coupled with his pro-Teheran drift, provoked a significant change in Soviet policy toward the Afghan Communist movement during the course of 1976. Until then, Moscow had shown little concern over the debilitating Parcham-Khalq split. So long as Kabul had leaned toward Moscow in its foreign policy, both groups were instructed to wink at Daoud's rightist domestic posture. To the extent that Moscow paid attention to the quarreling Afghan Communists at all, it gave preference to Parcham, which had cooperated with its pro-Daoud policy after the 1973 coup, even though Khalq was the better organized of the two groups and had stronger cadres in the military and in the bureaucracy. As the year progressed, however, the Soviet line began to change. In a key pronouncement on June 23, 1976, the Iraqi Communist Party daily *Tariq Al-Shaab,* then the principal mouthpiece for Moscow on Afghan matters, published an unprecedented appeal for Communist unity in Afghanistan. It offered, in effect, to

recognize the Khalq leader Taraki as the leader of a unified party if he would come to terms with Parcham leaders. This 1976 unity appeal was the opening gun of a Soviet effort to orchestrate a merger of the two parties that finally proved successful in May 1977.

Ideologically, both the Khalq and the Parcham factions were strongly pro-Soviet in the Sino-Soviet rivalry, but the KGB found Karmal and the Parchamites "more reasonable, more willing to listen," said the leading Soviet academic specialist on Afghanistan, Yuri Gankovsky of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The Khalqis were viewed as "too radical, too headstrong, too unpredictable."[6]

On Afghan domestic problems, the Khalq had a more orthodox Marxist-Leninist approach than the Parcham. Moreover, the ideological conflict between the two factions masked what were basic social differences. Most of the Parchamites came from Persian-influenced, urban, upper-class backgrounds. Since many had family ties with the ruling elite, the Khalqis branded them the "Royal Communist Party." Even those Parchamites who were members of the Pushtun majority spoke Dari, the Afghan variant of Persian, and were culturally isolated from Pushtun tribal life. By contrast, the Khalqis represented the rising, newly educated, lower-middle-class Pushtuns from small towns and rural areas who not only wanted Pushtun influence to be dominant inside Afghanistan but also favored active efforts to reclaim the lost territories.

Karmal was Dari-speaking and Kabul-born. His father, a general, belonged to a Pushtun sub-tribe that had abandoned the Pushtu language; Pushtun nationalists claimed that his mother was a Tajik. Amin, by contrast, spoke Pushtu, came from a small town, and championed Pushtun political and cultural causes. Karmal was a more polished orator, but it was Amin who worked most effectively to build his power base during the 1970s, especially in the military, where the Khalq gradually emerged as a much stronger force than the Parcham. A magnetic, driving personality, Amin attracted a fervently loyal following of politically conscious young Pushtuns in the armed forces. At his insistence, the agreement merging the two groups into the new Peoples' Democratic Party did not cover their underground activities in the armed forces.

The merger set up a unified party Central Committee in which Khalq and Parcham each had fifteen members. But Amin continued to operate his Khalq military commission independently. Parcham military commissar Mir Akbar Khaiber also carried on his own organizing efforts, focusing on Soviet-trained officers in the underground "Armed Forces Revolutionary Organization" that had helped Daoud to win power. While this group had purportedly been disbanded when the PDPA was formed, knowledgeable Soviet sources told me that the GRU, ignoring Central Committee directives, had encouraged Khaiber and other contacts to keep the group intact.[7] Some of its leading members were non-Pushtun officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Qader of the air force, who refused to accept Amin's discipline.

The GRU and the KGB were in competition during this period for control over Afghan Communist activities, and neither of them was fully aware of what Amin was doing. Colonel Alexander Morozov, deputy KGB station chief from

1975 to 1979, recalled in an interview that "we didn't want to let them know what we knew. They had their own informers, and we had our own."[8]

The GRU–KGB rivalry was to prove important in shaping the events that led up to the occupation, reinforcing Afghan Communist power struggles both before and after the 1978 revolution. In theory, the KGB was responsible for internal security in all branches of the armed forces and occupied, accordingly, a more important position in the Soviet power hierarchy than the GRU. In practice, however, the GRU operated "largely independently" of the KGB, especially overseas.[9] The GRU controlled its own internal security, in contrast to other organs of the armed forces, where KGB agents were responsible for ensuring loyalty to the Soviet state.[10] In foreign countries, the senior representative of the GRU was answerable only to the Central Committee and to the head of the GRU in Moscow.[11] Thus, in Afghanistan, the GRU was free to build up its own closely guarded network of agents in the armed forces, while the KGB maintained its contacts primarily with civilian PDPA leaders.

Behind the facade of the 1977 merger, the Afghan Communist movement was divided, in reality, between the Parcham, with its KGB links, the GRU-sponsored Armed Forces Revolutionary Organization, and Amin's Pushtun Khalqi network, which maintained correct but arm's-length relations with both the GRU and the KGB.

Amin's freewheeling style, together with the fact that he had gone to the United States twice for postgraduate studies financed by U.S. aid grants, made him suspect in the eyes of the GRU and the KGB alike. During his four years at Columbia University Teachers College, Amin became national president of the Afghan Student Association in 1963. This later exposed him to charges of CIA ties when a *Ramparts* article showed that the organization had received funds since 1961 from the CIA-supported American Friends of the Middle East.[12]

Upon his return to Afghanistan in 1965, Amin became principal of the Central Teacher Training School, which received substantial funds from a U.S. aid project run by Teachers College. The late American anthropologist Louis Dupree, who was living in Kabul at the time, recalled that the Columbia aid project served as cover for several CIA men. "Amin knew them well," Dupree observed. "He took American money for his school and then, behind their backs, recruited the brightest teachers for the Communist Party. But you can imagine how it all looked to the Russians."[13]

Ending The Soviet Tilt

On visits to Teheran and Kabul in January and February 1977, I found numerous indications of the confrontation then shaping up between Iran and the Soviet Union. In Teheran, Jafar Nadim, the third-ranking official in the Foreign Ministry, spoke confidently of the leverage that Savak was exercising on the Daoud regime. Iranian aid, he said, had been conditioned on a continuing crackdown against both Parcham and Khalq, plus an Afghan promise to conclude a peace agreement with Pakistan ending all Afghan support for insurgent

groups in Pakistani Baluch and Pushtun tribal areas.[14] In Kabul, President Daoud explained to me that Iran's new economic potential had altered the geopolitical equation in the region, offering an alternative to excessive dependence on Moscow. "Our historical relations with Iran were unpleasant," he said, "but we must adapt to the new realities."[15]

Told of this conversation, Britain's Ambassador to Afghanistan Roy Crook, a veteran Afghan specialist, predicted that "if it goes too far and too fast,"Teheran's diplomacy "will surely upset the Russians and produce a reaction." The Soviets were beginning to give significant help to the Afghan Communists, he said, in order to keep Daoud in line and to prepare for an increasingly uncertain future. But "they are still generally satisfied with the degree of influence they have, provided that the drift to the right does not go too much further. They do not really want a confrontation with Iran because they fear that the Shah might seek to break up the country. They think in terms of history, that the Persians would like to re-annex the areas they ruled until the eighteenth century."[16]

In the year that followed this prescient warning, Daoud accelerated his shift to the right in both domestic and foreign affairs. Armed with his new one-party constitution, formally promulgated in February 1977, he gave increased powers to Interior Minister Nuristani, who intensified repression of the Communists and other opposition elements. Former Soviet Ambassador A. M. Puzanov has revealed that Amin, angered by this crackdown, wanted to attempt the overthrow of Daoud in early 1977 but was "held back" by Moscow.[17] Outwardly, Soviet-Afghan relations appeared undisturbed. But simmering tensions soon exploded when Daoud clashed directly with Brezhnev on April 12 during a Moscow visit that helped to set the stage for the climactic events to follow.

Recalling this encounter, Abdul Samad Ghaus, then deputy Foreign Minister and Daoud's long-time confidant, writes that the Soviet leader objected to what he called a "considerable increase" in the number of experts from NATO countries working in Afghanistan. In the past, Brezhnev said, the Afghan government did not allow experts from NATO countries to be stationed in the northern parts of the country,

> but this practice was no longer strictly followed. The Soviet Union took a grim view of these developments and wanted the Afghan government to get rid of those experts, who were nothing more than spies.
>
> A chill fell on the room. Some of the Russians seemed visibly embarrassed. . . . In a cold, unemotional voice Daoud . . . told Brezhnev that what was just said could never be accepted by the Afghans, who viewed his statement as a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. . . . Daoud said, and I remember clearly his exact words: "We will never allow you to dictate to us how to run our country and whom to employ in Afghanistan. How and where we employ the foreign experts will remain the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan state. Afghanistan shall remain poor, if necessary, but free in its acts and decisions."

After saying this, Ghaus concludes, Daoud and all the other Afghans present abruptly stood up and were starting to walk out when Brezhnev, "rising from his chair with some difficulty," hurried after him. Reminding Daoud of his request for a private conversation, the Soviet leader offered to meet "whenever conve-

nient for you," whereupon Daoud replied "in a clear, loud voice for all to hear, 'I wish to inform your Excellency that there is no longer any need for that meeting.'"[18]

In an interview several months later, former Afghan Foreign Secretary Waheed Abdullah gave me a similar account, adding that Brezhnev had specifically objected to the presence in Afghanistan of U.S. satellite and seismological experts whom the Soviets suspected of espionage and had pointed to certain members of the Afghan cabinet as American stooges.

In the year between his Moscow visit and the Communist coup on April 28, 1978, Daoud broadened his search for ways to offset Afghan military and economic dependence on the Soviet Union. He increased the number of officers to be sent for military training each year to India, Egypt, and the United States and negotiated a new training program for air force officers with Turkey. In addition to his slowly developing aid linkages with Iran, he concluded a $500 million aid package with Saudi Arabia for hydroelectric development, as well as other aid agreements with China, the Kuwait Fund, the OPEC Special Fund, and the Islamic Bank for Development. Openly distancing himself from the radical wing of the nonaligned movement led by Cuba, Daoud criticized Havana on several occasions, declaring that Afghanistan would pursue "true nonalignment." His identification with the moderate wing of the movement led by India and Yugoslavia became increasingly explicit. After Daoud's visits to New Delhi and Belgrade, Kabul was chosen as the site of a meeting of nonaligned foreign ministers to be held in May.

Perhaps even more disquieting in Soviet eyes was a Middle East diplomatic offensive that included two visits by Daoud to Egypt as well as stopovers in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Daoud's second visit to Cairo came just after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat had returned from Israel. In the presence of the Soviet Ambassador, Sadat said in a banquet toast to Daoud that "we are following, with all admiration, the wise nationalist policy you have laid down on the basis of the independence of the national will and rejection of alignment, subservience and spheres of influence."[19] The Shah was scheduled to visit Kabul in June, and Daoud was preparing for a White House meeting with President Carter in September in which he was expected to seek greatly upgraded U.S. economic assistance.

Afghans were ambivalent about the prospect of multiplying foreign aid at a time when aid already accounted for 60 percent of 1977–1978 budget expenditures. Many intellectuals argued that this dependence was unavoidable, offering the only way to get the modernization process started. But Pushtun nationalists, including the Khalqi Communists, believed that Daoud was seeking to obtain aid at the price of a craven surrender to Pakistan dictated by Washington and Teheran. Emboldened by his American and Irainian diplomatic support, Zia had made a rapprochement with Kabul dependent on nothing less than formal acceptance of the Durand Line and burial of the "Pushtunistan" issue.

Initially, Daoud balked. However, in the second of two meetings with Zia, held in islamabad in early March 1978, a compromise began to take shape. Daoud appeared ready to abandon the goal of independent Pushtun and Baluch

states in return for an unspecified form of autonomy for the two ethnic minorities within a "restructured" Pakistani constitution. Asked at a farewell press conference whether the Durand Line had been discussed, he replied that "everything was discussed, and with the passage of time everything would fall in place."[20]

With Zia scheduled to visit Kabul in August, Daoud's critics began to whisper after his return that he was indeed preparing to accept the Durand Line, thus betraying the dream of a "Greater Afghanistan" incorporating the lost territories. Nationalist suspicions soon intensified when Daoud told a meeting of Pushtun and Baluch leaders in Kabul that all of their eight thousand activists and guerrillas from Pakistan who had taken refuge in Afghanistan should leave by April 30. Ajmal Khattak, one of the Pushtun leaders present, told me that Daoud had defended this decision by pointing to Zia's release of the Pushtun and Baluch prisoners in Pakistan who had been jailed by Bhutto. "He told us not to worry, we would have our rights under Zia," Khattak said. "We told him he was either a fool or a knave and we would not go."[21]

Khattak recalled that word of Daoud's "sellout" spread rapidly through the ranks of Pushtuns in the armed forces, helping Amin and his organizers to solidify their underground networks. Abdul Samad Ghaus denies that Daoud intended to force the guerrillas to return. But he acknowledges that Daoud and Zia were close to resolving the issue of the Durand Line and "Pushtunistan." "The strong possibility that this issue was going to be settled," he declares, "was perhaps one of the underlying causes that hastened the Communist takeover of Afghanistan."[22] Confronted with the prospect of a settlement, Amin and the Khalqis saw themselves as the only remaining guardians of national honor; for Moscow, too, the prospect was profoundly unsettling, foreshadowing a regional geopolitical realignment directly contrary to long-standing Soviet strategic goals.

On the Eve of the Communist Coup

Looking back on the year preceding the Communist coup, I remember vividly the siege mentality that pervaded the Afghan government. Daoud had drifted increasingly into the self-isolation so characteristic of dictators. His insistence on unquestioning personal loyalty and total control over even minor administrative details drove many capable advisers out of government. While Daoud himself lived an austere life, corruption charges against his intimates, some of them related to aid transactions, cast a pall over his regime. Economic development was floundering despite the massive aid influx. With inflation running over 20 percent, a mood of economic desperation was spreading, especially among already hard-pressed workers and tenant farmers. Pay raises for the Army and price subsidies for civil servants were eroding the fiscal stability of the regime without defusing the growing discontent, fanned by rising prices, among these groups. As the small Kabul business community lost confidence in the government, private investment dried up.

Faced by mounting criticism, Daoud gradually found his power base limited to an ultra-conservative clique in the cabinet and a narrow circle of police and military loyalists who began to conduct their own private vendettas against Communist and other critics whom they regarded as threats to the regime. Interior Minister Nuristani, Defense Minister Haider Rasuli, and Vice President Abdul Illahi were widely perceived to be working for "the total elimination of the left from positions of power."[23] Diplomats talked freely about the growing influence enjoyed by Savak, Rabitat, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Hezbe Islami and other Afghan fundamentalist groups, previously repressed, were beginning to resurface, emboldened by Zia's Islamization policies in neighboring Pakistan.

It was in this tense, uncertain, and polarized atmosphere that the Parchamite leader Mir Akbar Khaiber was murdered outside his home on April 17, 1978, touching off the final showdown between the Communists and Daoud. To this day the identity of the killer remains uncertain. A spokesman for Daoud officially blamed Hezbe Islami. Louis Dupree, then living in Kabul, concluded that the murder was directly or indirectly arranged by Interior Minister Nuristani, who had told a number of friends that it was time to "finish off" the Communists before they got too strong. "He was the loyal Beria," Dupree observed, "the type of man who thought he knew what was best for Daoud and didn't have to tell him everything." Daoud's confidant, Abdul Samad Ghaus, attempts to pin the blame on Hafizullah Amin. It was the "predominant belief" in Kabul, he relates, that Amin had arranged both the Khaiber murder and an unsuccessful earlier attempt to kill Babrak Karmal.[24]

Ghaus suggests that the Khalqis "were clearing out their potential rivals in anticipation of a seizure of power." When Karmal succeeded Amin in 1980, he made this charge against him as part of a broader effort to blacken his predecessor, and his allegation, while self-serving, cannot be completely dismissed. As Parcham's principal organizer in the armed forces, Khaiber was in direct competition with Amin, who was seeking to build Khalq military cells. He and Amin were often trying to recruit the same officers and had clashed bitterly during the merger negotiations over control of party military cells. According to a variety of Afghan Communist sources, Khaiber fought until the end for a merger of Khalq and Parcham cells that would have undermined Amin's dominant party role in the critical military sphere.

Whoever killed him,[25] Khaiber's martyrdom touched off an unprecedented popular upheaval. More than fifteen thousand angry, slogan-shouting mourners turned out for his funeral procession two days later, an extraordinarily large crowd by Afghan standards. Taraki and other top Communist leaders, with the exception of Amin, spoke at a tumultuous mass rally following the funeral. Daoud was alarmed by this demonstration of Communist strength and decided to round up the party high command as his hard-line advisers had long been urging him to do. Late on the night of April 25, police imprisoned Taraki, Karmal, and five other Politburo members who had spoken at the rally, charging them with maligning Islam and advocating violence. Significantly, however,

military officers suspected of Communist affiliations or sympathies were not arrested. More important, Hafizullah Amin was initially placed only under house arrest.

The failure to imprison Amin proved to be a momentous blunder. As the Khalq military commissar, he was the author and apparently the sole custodian of a contingency plan for a possible Communist coup that had just been drafted and approved by Taraki several weeks earlier. The plan specified the assignments to be carried out by twenty two designated army and air force officers, almost all of them Khalqis. Since the earliest anticipated date for the coup was in August,[26] the scheme had been only casually discussed with some of the key projected participants. But when Taraki was arrested, Amin decided to act. Rumors were spreading that a Cabinet meeting scheduled for two days later would order the execution of the entire top party leadership. More than twelve hours elapsed between the time that Amin was placed under house arrest and the time that he was put behind bars, and during this interval, he managed to smuggle out the instructions that set the coup in motion.[27]

What happened in the predawn and early morning hours of April 26—and in the two days thereafter—is a chronicle of lucky accidents and zany mishaps that reads like the script of a Grade B movie. When the police came to search Amin's home at 1:00 A.M., Amin had just learned of Taraki's arrest. The contingency plan, which had been kept in a bedroom drawer, was hastily hidden in the mattress of a bed where one of Amin's children was sleeping. Several hours later, Amin was still puzzling over what to do when the police let a little known but trusted party activist named Faqir Mohammed enter the house, mistaking him for Amin's elder brother, whom he resembled.

Under the eyes of the police, Faqir got out of the house with the plan in his pocket and took it to Amin's principal air force contact, Colonel Syed Gulabzoi, who passed it on to another key participant, Major Aslam Watanjar, deputy commander of the strategically placed Fourth Armored Division. Watanjar was instructed to start the revolution on the following day with a tank attack on Daoud's palace at noon that would be backed by simultaneous air sorties. To make sure that the message got through, Amin wrote out a second copy of the plan and told his teen-age son Rahman to have photocopies made in the bazaar for distribution to Gulabzoi, Watanjar, and several others. Like Faqir, his son was able to leave the house with the plan in his pocket under the eyes of the police.

Abdul Samad Ghaus, attempting to account for this bungling, explains that Amin, unlike the seven Communist leaders initially arrested, had not spoken after the funeral. Thus, he could not be charged with specific offenses on the basis of tape-recorded evidence. Ghaus writes that Daoud, concerned about his foreign image, was "obsessed" with observing the legal proprieties. It was only when the police were certain that "suspicious activities were going on in and around his house" that they had grounds for belatedly jailing Amin.[28] This is an unconvincing alibi for what may well have been merely the indifference of half-sleeping policemen. Another, more plausible explanation is that Amin had a highly placed friend in the police whom he had known since boyhood.[29] In any

case, by the time Amin was imprisoned, apparently around 11:00 A.M.,[30] preparations for the "Saur (April) Revolution" were under way.

An Afghan Coup, Afghan Style

Play-by-play accounts of the coup make clear that it was a last-minute operation, orchestrated by Afghans, in which support from Soviet intelligence agencies and military advisers, if any, came only after they were confronted with a virtual fait accompli. One such account is the official version published by the new PDPA regime soon after it took power.[31] Another is *The Accidental Coup*, by Louis Dupree, who was resident in Kabul at the time.[32] Still another is a detailed narrative by the Pakistani political activist Raja Anwar, based on conversations with Afghan Communist fellow-prisoners in a Kabul jail.[33] These three versions are broadly compatible but differ on significant details. In piecing together what happened, I have drawn on all of them, as well as on my own extensive interviews in Kabul in August 1978. The official version is particularly suspect because it blatantly exaggerates and embellishes Amin's role. More important, it glosses over the haphazard, comic-opera character of the proceedings. "Foul-up followed foul-up," writes Dupree, "and the side with the fewer foul-ups won."[34]

Far from sensing trouble ahead, the Daoud regime was in a festive mood after the arrest of the Communist leaders. Late in the evening of April 26, all military commanders in the Kabul area received direct telephone calls from Minister of Defense Rasuli ordering them to arrange official celebrations of the downfall of the *Kafir* (heathens). Most military units held lavish parties, complete with Afghan folk singing and dancing, and were thus in a highly disorganized state when Major Watanjar announced to the Fourth Armored Division at 9:00 A.M. on April 27 that the revolution had begun. Learning of the announcement, General Rasuli called on several base commanders to rush troops to the presidential palace, only to find them either unreachable or unable to round up their men.

According to Amin's plan for the coup. Watanjar was supposed to start his tank attack on the palace at noon, but not until an Afghan Air Force squadron had buzzed all of the cantonment areas in the city and had begun to fly low sorties over the palace. The appearance of the air force was to be the signal for Khalqi units scattered in various cantonments to carry out their assignments. When he arrived on schedule with the first column of some 50 T-62 heavy tanks, however, Watanjar found no sign of the air force. His decision to launch the attack, nonetheless, with his six hundred men, marked the start of a confused, indecisive struggle that continued throughout the day until air force supporters of the coup finally did get into action four hours later. Daoud was unable all afternoon to get loyal troops to come to his rescue, and the disorganized rebels made no attempt, until the air force arrived, to locate and release the imprisoned Communist leaders or to capture such key targets as the Defense Ministry, the government communications center, and Radio Kabul.

As the tanks of Watanjar's Fourth Division rolled through the city, they were

shelled by units of the Fifteenth Armored Division, which supported Daoud. Since their communications systems had been cut off by the Daoud-controlled Defense Ministry, many of Watanjar's tanks, lacking radio guidance, could not tell friend from foe and fired on one another. Moreover, to add to the mayhem, April 27 happened to be a Thursday. At noon most government and private offices closed so that their employees could have a long weekend, Friday being the Muslim day of rest. Thus it was that at midday, just as fighting began at the palace, people not far away were lining up for buses, while taxis were honking at tanks and traffic police were impatiently motioning tanks to pull over to the curb, assuming they were merely on maneuvers.

Daoud had promptly adjourned a cabinet meeting when the attack started. He instructed General Rasuli to go personally to the nearby Qargah base to find out why rocket artillery units and the key Eighth Mechanized Division, believed to be loyal, had not responded to his appeals for help. But when Rasuli's staff car went through a red light and a taxi slammed into the car broadside, the General's arm was broken. He was visibly in pain as he pleaded with recalcitrant officers at Qargah, where members of the military were still in the midst of singing and dancing when he arrived. Rasuli found that most of the officers there were stalling for time, waiting to see how the wind was blowing. Dupree, who estimated that not more than three thousand men were involved in the fighting, concluded that "throughout the country most unit commanding officers sat tight until the fighting ended and the victors emerged."[35]

Eventually, Rasuli got support from some units of the Eighth and Seventh Divisions as well as from an artillery battery. But as he was leading the Eighth Division into battle, with his arm in a sling, his jeep was hit by a shell from a tank unit that Watanjar had sent to intercept him. He promptly fled from the scene, and most of the Eighth Division defected to the rebels. General Rasuli was captured and shot shortly before 5 P.M. when he and several of Daoud's other generals were found hiding in a chicken coop. At about this time, five hours behind schedule, air force Migs and SU-25s started to bomb the palace, and Watanjar's troops, after a search of city jails, liberated Amin and the other imprisoned Communist leaders. In theory, the palace was well defended against air attacks. On the day of the coup, however, the electronic gear that controlled the palace missile batteries was not in working order.

Why did the air force fail to show up at noon?

The air force Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Qader, a Dari-speaking non-Pushtun with loose Parcham ties, was one of the leaders of the Soviet-trained military faction that had been nurtured by the GRU. After helping Daoud to win power, he had turned against him. Amin distrusted Qader but had been forced to give him a pivotal role in the coup in order to assure air force participation. His plan called for Qader to turn over command of his headquarters at Bagram Air Base at 9 A.M. to a Khalqi fellow officer and then to proceed by helicopter to Kabul airport. There Qader was to direct operations against the palace. But he did not turn over his command. Instead, Qader remained locked in his office until early afternoon.

His Khalqi critics claim that he was vacillating over whether to support the

coup and had locked himself in. His defenders say that Daoud supporters had incarcerated him against his will. Colonel Madhu Sameyran, then the Indian Military Attaché, who had extensive contacts in the Afghan Air Force, suggested another possibility during my August visit. The prevailing impression among high air force officers, he said, was that Qader had tipped off the GRU concerning Amin's plans but had not been given a go-ahead to participate.

Colonel Sameyran pointed out that there were some 350 Soviet military advisers and technicians in Kabul in early 1978, many of them involved in assisting the ground control and antiaircraft missile operations at Bagram and Kabul airports. He emphasized that it would have been difficult for the air force to operate on April 27 without help from Soviet technicians. Qader, he said, had necessarily delayed joining the coup until Soviet advisers had signaled their approval. Called on to make a decision with little warning before the coup was launched, they had received word from Moscow just in time to go along. American Embassy officials claimed that Soviet personnel were seen with the armored units that took control of Kabul airport's military wing in the early afternoon and were also observed helping with ground control operations at Bagram. By contrast, Raja Anwar insists that Soviet advisers "kept themselves uninvolved.[36]

Whatever the truth, Qader did in the end join the coup, clearing the way for the air force to go into action. A grand total of six aircraft participated, all from Bagram. By 7 P.M.., after the palace had been bombed for more than two hours, Qader and Watanjar were reading announcements over Radio Kabul in Dari and Pushtu, respectively, declaring that a "Revolutionary Military Council" had taken power. Later that night, Daoud and his family were murdered in their chambers after refusing to surrender voluntarily, and by dawn it was all over.

The overall impression left by the available evidence is one of an improvised, ad hoc Soviet response to an unexpected situation. According to Alexander Morozov, whose tenure as deputy KGB chief included the months leading up to April 26, Moscow knew that a coup was in the wind and had strongly advised against it. But the KGB did not discover that Amin had actually set plans for the takeover in motion until "nine or ten o'clock" on the night of April 25, after the GRU had been tipped off by one of its informants.[37] Later, the KGB "learned that Amin's instructions about the uprising included a severe ban on letting the Russians know about the planned action. Did he fear that we would interfere? One of the plotters more loyal to the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] and the U.S.S.R. than to Amin divulged this secret to us. Daoud could have been warned, but neither the Soviet Embassy in Kabul nor Moscow could even consider betraying the PDPA."[38] Soon after midnight, Morozov told me, confused messages came from the Foreign Ministry and KGB headquarters, with "nothing in them to advise us to try to stop 'Amin's adventure.'"

The ad hoc character of the Soviet role was especially evident during the confused power struggle surrounding the birth of the new reqime. Qader, as the highest-ranking military officer involved, was the first to lay claim to leadership by proclaiming his Revolutionary Military Council. Watanjar, although a Pushtun with loose Khalq ties, initially supported him. Both were heroes of the 1973

coup and saw themselves as saviors of the nation. Reluctant to accept PDPA discipline, neither wanted to play second fiddle to the self-aggrandizing Amin. Significantly, the PDPA was not even mentioned in their April 27 proclamation. For the next three days, the Soviet news agency Tass also made no mention of the PDPA, treating the change of power consistently as a "military coup détat." In the light of subsequent events, as Raymond Garthoff has observed, this strongly suggests that the Soviet Union was not in control of events in Kabul. Moscow would have used a term such as "popular revolution," he writes, if it had expected a PDPA regime wrapped in Communist colors to emerge just three days later.[39]

Soviet leaders were apparently divided at this stage over what to do next. Several Soviet sources cited credible evidence to me indicating that the GRU had initially encouraged Qader to form his military council but was overruled by a Central Committee directive, reflecting KGB influence, supporting the creation of a more broad-based regime.[40] According to Babrak Karmal, his principal KGB contact, Vilioz Osadchy, urged him to work for a coalition government headed by non-Communists in which the PDPA would share power. Osadchy warned that an overtly Communist regime would provoke concerted conservative opposition and that the PDPA was not yet strong enough to rule on its own.[41] But Amin recognized that he could best consolidate his personal power through monolithic PDPA rule. With support from his tightly knit Pushtun Khalq army cells, he won out in a bitter intraparty struggle with Karmal on April 28–29, arguing that the PDPA should claim the exclusive right to rule in the name of a successful "people's revolution." Karmal, echoing the Central Committee directive, contended that the coup represented a victory for "national democratic" forces but was not a revolution.[42]

By the time a high-level KGB mission headed by the director of foreign intelligence, Vladimir Khrychkov, had arrived on the scene, the only issue left to be decided was the composition of the government. Khrychkov insisted on "an equal proportion of representatives from the Khalq and Parcham factions,"[43] and on April 30, the Revolutionary Military Council became the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The new council was headed by Taraki as President, with Karmal as Vice President, Amin as First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Watanjar as Deputy Prime Minister and Communication Minister, and Qader as Defense Minister. Despite his third-ranking position, however, Amin's grip on the Khalq army cells enabled him to dominate the new regime from the start.

The Emergence of Amin

The emergence of Amin as the strongest figure in Kabul was clearly not in the Soviet game plan. Nevertheless, Moscow was the first capital to recognize the new government, a fact often cited as proof that the coup was Soviet-orchestrated.[44] Two weeks later, the Soviet press no longer spoke of a military coup, hailing the April 28 "revolution." The Soviet Communist Party congratu-

lated the PDPA in language normally reserved for fellow Communist parties but carefully avoided formally categorizing it as Communist.[45]

Soviet leaders no doubt calculated that it would be easy to control a regime so totally dependent on them and that the warring Afghan leaders could be kept together under Soviet discipline. They underrated both Amin's determination to consolidate his personal power and the degree of loyalty that he commanded among Pushtun military and police officers. Above all, they were not prepared for his possessive grip over his military and police networks. When I visited Kabul in August, Third World and East European diplomats close to the Soviet Embassy told me of irritation among their GRU and KGB friends over Amin's refusal to let them exercise the supervision that normally went with massive Soviet aid in a satellite state.

Two long interviews with Amin on June 6 and August 13, 1978, revealed him to be an intensely nationalistic, independent man who exuded a swaggering self-confidence. During the first of these, on the occasion of his initial appearance as Foreign Minister at the United Nations, I arranged to visit Kabul and asked, among other things, if I could meet President Taraki. "You can meet *me*," he replied with a flush of anger and a cold stare. "You can meet *me*." This was the first signal that prepared me for what was to be an intensifying power struggle throughout the next sixteen months, culminating in Taraki's death. Similarly, Amin's reply to a question in August concerning Soviet influence in Kabul brought a cavalier response that alerted me to possible trouble ahead in his relations with the Soviet Union. "You Americans shouldn't worry about us," he declared. "We are Afghans. We know how to handle the Russians. Remember, they need us as much as or more than we need them, and they need me more than I need them." Subsequently, in a German newspaper interview, he referred to Afghan-Soviet relations as "kinsmanlike, brotherly relations that are, indeed, between equal brothers."[46]

The potential for tensions between Amin and Moscow was further underlined when he spoke passionately to me of the "unity of all Afghans from the Oxus to the Indus." History, he stated, "gives us a sacred mission. We cannot abandon our persecuted brother Pushtuns on the other side of the Khyber. Pakistan says, 'Don't even mention the Pushtuns and the Baluch.' But how can we accept this?" Pointing to evidence that Islamabad and Washington were stirring up "extremist" Muslim rebellion against his regime, he warned that "the Pushtuns and Baluch in Pakistan will rise up and defend us. No one can deny that the two problems, the Afghan revolution and the issue of Pushtunistan, are related." In making this threat, Amin was conspicuously out of tune with the shifting Soviet line. In order to avoid arousing Pakistani opposition to the new regime, the Soviet Union had abruptly soft-pedaled "Pushtunistan" after April 28.

As Amin and his adversaries struggled for power throughout 1978 and 1979, Moscow found itself steadily drawn into the fray on the side of his rivals and increasingly distrustful of his reliability as an ally. Amin confronted opposition to his bid for leadership from three principal sources: Karmal and his Parcham faction; Watanjar and Qader; and President Taraki himself.

Launching his offensive against Karmal first, Amin argued that it was unjus for Parcham to control half of the positions in the cabinet and in the part Central Committee under the unity formula that had been imposed by Khrychkov in April. Khalq had played the leading role in the revolt, he contended, and some of the Parchamites were Daoud sympathizers.[47] Amid growing Khalqi pressures for the reconstitution of the leadership, the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee sent a mission, headed by its chief Afghan specialist, Nikolai Simonenko, to preserve PDPA unity. To the dismay of Karmal's KGB supporters, however, writes Alexander Morozov, "Amin isolated the advisers from Karmal and quickly indoctrinated Simonenko, turning him into a supporter of the Khalq faction."[48] Amin ignored a tepid letter submitted to him by Simonenko in the name of the Central Committee, pleading for party unity. By a narrow margin, Amin, supported by Taraki, won the approval of the PDPA Politburo in late June for the immediate exile of Karmal and six other Parcham leaders as ambassadors. Moscow persuaded Taraki to send Karmal to Prague, where his security could be ensured and he could be kept in reserve for a possible return to power in the future.

Just two days before Karmal left the country, the Politburo named Amin to replace him as First Secretary of the party. Partly in response to Soviet pressure, however, Taraki did not purge Parchamites from many of the government posts they held. In particular, Qader, a Parcham sympathizer, remained as Defense Minister. Internecine strife continued after the departure of the seven envoys, culminating in the August arrest of Qader and two other generals on charges of plotting a coup that was to have been staged on September 4, the day of the Muslim festival Eid.[49]

The coup attempt gave Amin a justification for rounding up all known or suspected Parchamites. Karmal and the other envoys were immediately summoned home to stand trial. But not only did they refuse to come back; all of them promptly disappeared, absconding with the funds locally controlled by each of their embassies. Most of them later turned up in Moscow or in Soviet-bloc capitals. Karmal himself remained under wraps in Prague as a government guest until he moved in October 1979 to Moscow, where he remained until his installation as president of Afghanistan following the murder of Amin on the first day of the Soviet occupation.[50]

Qader's arrest quickly brought the latent rivalry between Amin and Watanjar to the surface. Watanjar, as a career military man who had played a leading role in the April revolt, felt it was his right to move from his post as Interior Minister to the vacant position of Defense Minister. But Amin wanted a direct grip on this key power center. As a "compromise," Taraki himself became Defense Minister, with Amin as his Deputy Minister in operational control. Watanjar was then demoted to his former post of Communications Minister, an affront that hardened his antagonism toward Amin.

Moscow made no secret of its dismay as Amin, disregarding Soviet advice, used his newly consolidated power to push ahead with sweeping reforms at breakneck speed. As Beverly Male[51] and other authors have shown, many of these Khalqi reforms were a laudable and well-intentioned response to the feudal

inequities and social obscurantism of Afghan society. In Soviet eyes, however, the Khalqi moves were ill prepared, much too ambitious, and certain to provoke bitter opposition from rural vested interests, stoking the fires of a nascent insurgency that would be exploited by Pakistan and the United States to destabilize the new regime.

This is precisely what happened as the reform drive unfolded. Khalqi commissars pushed ahead with little sensitivity to the strength of tribally based local power structures that had successfully resisted incursions by Kabul's nation builders for centuries. On paper, the first of a series of land reform decrees sounded reasonable enough. This reform would have limited land holdings to five acres. At the same time, it would have enabled tenant farmers to escape from the vicious circle of ever-compounding mortgage debt on their land incurred in order to purchase fertilizer, seed, and other necessities; if a tenant paid 20 percent of his crop for five years, his mortgage was to be considered paid off. Kabul proclaimed the reform with great fanfare, but it was promptly sabotaged by an alliance of rural moneylenders, landlords, and *mullahs,* or priests. The moneylenders refused to make their usual loans for fertilizer and seed to their mortgaged tenant farmers, and the government had not prepared alternate credit facilities before issuing the decree. Moreover, the *mullahs,* many of them landlords themselves, ruled that it would be a "cardinal sin" to return the land to its owners on the basis of the five-year formula. Even the small number of farmers who were also to regain their lands through the decree were soon forced to remortgage them.

Cavalier treatment of Muslim divines suspected of opposition to the regime, together with reforms affecting the status of women, gave the regime a reputation for "godless" disrespect toward Islamic traditions. Like its economic reforms, the regime's social reforms were mild by Western standards but aroused predictable convulsions in the Afghan context. One of the government's most controversial decrees, denounced bitterly by the *mullahs,* required the consent of both parties to a marriage and placed a limit of 300 Afghanis ($9) on the amount of *haq mehr,* or "bride money," that could be paid to the father of the bride in return for his daughter. The money went to the bride, not to the father, if the contract was broken, a revolutionary concept in Afghan society.

Feminist leaders in Kabul hailed the reform. But in the countryside, where *haq mehr* was sanctified by centuries of tradition, the amount paid for a bride was a measure of her purity and social position. When arrests were made for violation of the decree, violence erupted. The *mullahs* were also able to discredit rural literacy campaigns among women by charging that the city women conducting these campaigns, often clad in skirts, were spreading immoral ideas. More broadly, they attacked textbooks containing Khalqi propaganda as "anti-Islamic," demanding the right to approve teaching materials in advance.

The popular goodwill initially shown toward the new regime rapidly dissolved as the reform drive proceeded and as Amin's widely feared secret police chief, his nephew, Assadullah Amin, launched a ruthless campaign of repression against suspected opponents. Revolutionary military courts dispensed summary justice, and the Pul-i-charki prison near Kabul became notorious for torture and

executions directed especially against prominent personalities associated with the ancien régime.[52] Antigovernment groups based in Pakistan began to send in armed guerrillas, seeking to capitalize on the growing discontent. However, contrary to the impression fostered at the time by the emigré groups, the insurgent movement was not a significant threat to the regime in late 1978. Inside the country, support for the movement was still uneven and disorganized. Externally, Islamic fundamentalist elements in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle East were beginning to finance like-minded guerrilla factions. But the Carter Administration, deeply divided over Afghan policy, had not yet decided whether to provide military assistance to the insurgent cause.

Vance versus Brzezinski

The Communist takeover had touched off a sharp internal debate on Afghanistan in Washington between Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who were already at odds over other aspects of American policy toward the Soviet Union. Vance recalls that the April coup was depicted by Brzezinski as the opening gambit in a Soviet master plan for achieving hegemony in Southwest Asia. It would be followed in due course, Brzezinski argued, by the incorporation of Afghanistan into the Soviet orbit and ultimately by political and military moves to subjugate the Gulf oil-producing states. Vance resisted this argument, however, since "we had no evidence of Soviet complicity in the coup."[53] Vance accepted the advice given by his Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Harold Saunders, who argued in a secret memorandum, now declassified, that "we need to take into account the mix of nationalism and Communism in the new leadership and seek to avoid driving the new regime into a closer embrace with the Soviet Union than it might wish."[54]

The United States recognized the Communist government and conducted normal diplomatic relations with it until February 1979, maintaining but not extending existing economic aid links. Significantly, soon after taking power, the new government made clear its desire for a substantial American presence, asking for upgraded aid totaling $300 million in loans and grants over a five-year period.[55]

The first high-level American visitor to Kabul after the coup was David Newsom, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, who met Amin, Taraki, and other leaders in mid-July. "They struck me as very ideological," Newsom told me, "but they were still Afghan nationalists. My assessment was that we were dealing with a regime that hadn't found itself. There were divisions in it and it was still on probation in Soviet eyes. I felt it was justifiable to keep what assets we had and to continue a holding action, a monitoring action."

Brzezinski, by contrast, "felt we shouldn't be there at all. From the beginning, Zbig had a much more confrontational view of the situation than Vance and most of us at State. He thought we should be doing something covertly to frustrate Soviet ambitions in that part of the world. On some occasions I was not

alone in raising questions about the wisdom and feasibility of what he wanted to do." CIA Director Stansfield Turner, for example, "was more cautious than Zbig, often arguing that something wouldn't work. Zbig wasn't worried about provoking the Russians, as some of us were, because he expected them to take over anyway."[56]

The debate within the Administration intensified after Adolph Dubs took over as Ambassador in July. A Russian-speaking Soviet specialist who had served in Moscow, Dubs had also acquired regional expertise as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs. He was sensitive both to the complexity of the interplay between the Soviet Communist Party and other parties and to the domestic dynamics of Afghan politics.

In a four-hour conversation over dinner in Kabul on August 10, Dubs outlined a subtle and carefully calibrated American Afghan policy for the years ahead. Not only should the United States pursue a "holding action" and seek to "avoid driving the new regime into a closer embrace with the Soviet Union than it might wish," but, over time, a more positive American approach could "significantly reduce" the existing level of Soviet influence in Kabul. Afghanistan would still have a more pronounced pro-Soviet tilt than it did before April, he said, but "it would not be a Soviet satellite, militarily or otherwise. Don't try to give it a label. He can't go as far as Tito or even Ceauşescu."

Reflecting on his first two exchanges with Amin, Dubs added that the Afghan leader was "a tough cookie who thinks of himself as a 'national Communist' and doesn't want to be any more dependent on them than he has to be." Several times, Dubs said that he sensed a disturbing note of bravado in Amin's references to Moscow. He suspected that Amin might prove ready to extend ties with the United States more rapidly than would be "prudent." The trick for the United States, he explained, would be to sustain cautious increases in aid and other links without provoking Soviet counterpressures on Amin and possible military intervention.

Brzezinski and Dubs were working directly at cross-purposes during late 1978 and early 1979. As he boasts in his memoirs, Brzezinski had steadily eroded Vance's power, persuading the President to transfer jurisdiction over the CIA from the Inter-Agency Policy Review Committee, headed by the Secretary of State, to the National Security Council's Special Coordinating Committee, which Brzezinski chaired as National Security Adviser.[57] This control over covert operations enabled Brzezinski to take the first steps toward a more aggressively anti-Soviet Afghan policy without the State Department's knowing much about it. The climate for such a policy improved rapidly when Moscow and Kabul signed their Friendship Treaty on December 5, 1978, with its provision for "consultation" and "by agreement, appropriate measures" in the event of a military threat to Afghanistan. The resulting mood of anxiety in Washington concerning Southwest Asia was intensified by the fall of the Shah and the Iranian Revolution in January 1979.

Recalling the changing atmosphere during the period, Brzezinski emphasized in an interview after he left the White House[58] that he had remained strictly within the confines of the President's policy at that stage not to provide

direct U.S. aid to the Afghan insurgency. Since there was no taboo on indirect support, however, the CIA had encouraged the newly entrenched Pakistani military regime of Zia Ul-Haq to launch its own program of military support for the insurgents. The CIA and the Pakistani Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI), he said, worked together closely on planning training programs for the insurgents and on coordinating the Chinese, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, and Kuwaiti aid that was beginning to trickle in. By early February 1979, this collaboration became an open secret when the *Washington Post* published an eyewitness report that at least two thousand Afghans were being trained at former Pakistani Army bases guarded by Pakistani patrols.[59]

Dubs, meanwhile, was arguing vigorously for keeping American options open, pleading that destabilization of the regime could provoke direct Soviet intervention. But he did not put forward a long-term policy plan. In the prevailing climate, Newsom said, "he knew that talk of weaning them away from the Russians would have been criticized by some as unrealistic and would have weakened his credibility."

Ironically, while Brzezinski was promoting armed opposition to Amin, Dubs was continuing to nurture his dialogue with the Afghan leader. Bruce Flatin, who served with Dubs as Political Counselor, later told me[60] that the Ambassador had talked with Amin fourteen times, often in unannounced meetings, before Dubs was killed in February 1979. No record of the content of these exchanges has yet surfaced. However, one modest but significant breakthrough that Dubs achieved was Amin's agreement to the restoration and expansion of a modest U.S. military training program for Afghan officers that had been cut off by the Pentagon after the April coup. In its congressional presentation for the 1979–1980 fiscal year, submitted in January 1979, the Defense Department proposed a $310,000 program.[61] Just one month later, the White House, reacting to the Afghan government's role in Dubs's death and its failure to apologize, announced "severe" reductions in economic aid to Kabul and the termination of "a military training program that was in the planning stages"[62]—raising the curtain, as Raymond Garthoff has observed, "on a previously undisclosed and rather surprising development that had been underway."[63]

Dubs was killed in a shoot-out on February 14 after his abduction by a Tajik, anti-Pushtun separatist group, the Setam-i-Milli (Oppressed Nation Movement). His captors demanded the release of their imprisoned leader, Badruddin Bahes, as the price for freeing the Ambassador. The government rejected the abductors' terms, denying that it was holding Bahes,[64] and refused to negotiate with the abductors, despite the American Embassy's demands. At that point, according to Afghan police officials, Dubs's captors served notice that they would kill him, and the police decided to storm the hotel room where he was held captive.

Before firing, the police asked Bruce Flatin to shout to Dubs through the hotel room door that he should hit the floor when he heard the first shots. Flatin could use German, the police suggested, which both he and the Ambassador knew and which Dubs's captors would not understand. But Flatin refused, reiterating the U.S. demand for negotiations. Over his protests, Afghan police

charged into the hotel room with their guns blazing, killing Dubs and two of his kidnappers.

The official U.S. version of the tragedy emphasized that four Soviet advisers on the scene worked hand in hand with the Afghan police, providing weapons and helping to load them. One of the advisers was allegedly spotted telling Afghan snipers when to fire.[65] Flatin, who met him later on several occasions, said that Amin blamed Parcham and thus cast suspicion indirectly on the KGB. Parcham and Setam-i-Milli worked "hand in glove," Amin had declared, reiterating Khalqi charges[66] that Setam-i-Milli leaders were linked with Karmal in the "Eid Conspiracy." "They wanted to embarrass me," Amin told Flatin. "They wanted to estrange the relations between the United States and Afghanistan."

Publicly, Amin maintained a sullen silence. His Khalqi defenders later acknowledged that the case had been badly mishandled but pointed out that he had faced an excruciating dilemma. Justifying his refusal to negotiate over the release of Bahes, they maintained that for Amin, as a Pushtun nationalist, it would have been political suicide to compromise with the number one leader of Tajik separatism. In American eyes, however, the shoot-out was inexcusable and could not have occurred without high-level sanction. By refusing to accept responsibility or to apologize, Brzezinski argued, Amin had revealed his anti-American, pro-Soviet colors. By August President Carter had cut off all U.S. aid, and by November, when Amin was at last ready for an official apology,[67] it was much too late to make any difference in the Washington debate.

Moscow Rejects Intervention

The death of Dubs led to growing American identification with the insurgent cause and marked the end of meaningful American efforts to wean Amin away from dependence on the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Soviet suspicions of Amin continued to grow. Moscow perceived him increasingly during 1979 as an opportunist who might turn to Washington and Islamabad if the rebels were to pose a serious threat to his regime.

Faced with a deepening power struggle in Kabul and a spreading insurgency, Soviet emissaries pressed Amin more and more insistently to share power with his rivals and to pursue more moderate domestic policies.[68] But Amin went his own way. On the one hand, he continued to call upon massive Soviet help in financing his regime, equipping it militarily and providing technical personnel for military operations against the rebels. On the other, he resisted Soviet control, brushing aside pressures for a slowdown in reforms and for greater Soviet involvement in running the secret police and the military.

Reviewing the events that led up to the occupation, Vadim Zagladin, who was First Deputy Director of the International Department of the Communist Party Central Committee under Brezhnev, pinpointed the Herat rebellion in March 1979 as a critical turning point. Fighting in Herat, one of Afghanistan's three major cities, raged for two weeks before Afghan forces brought it under control. At least nine and possibly as many as forty Soviet advisers and their

families were killed, together with some eight hundred to three thousand Afghans. Herat is located near the Iranian border, and the insurgent forces were spearheaded by thousands of unemployed Afghan workers, armed by the new regime of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had returned from exile after the fall of the Shah. But the uprising also received widespread local support from a predominantly Shia populace aroused by the anti-Communist appeals issued by the Shia leaders in Teheran.

"The ferocity of the opposition came as a very great shock to us," Zagladin recalled. "We became genuinely alarmed about Afghanistan for the first time. You can imagine how we felt when they paraded the bodies of our advisers through the streets, when even some of our women and children were killed in the most barbaric way."[69]

Confronted with urgent appeals from Taraki and Amin for Soviet troops, the Soviet Politburo met for three straight days in emergency session beginning March 17, anxiously debating the pros and cons of intervention. Minutes of the meeting obtained from Communist Party archives reveal initial vacillation followed by a gradual consensus that Moscow should step up its military aid and send more and better advisers but should stop short of sending Soviet forces.[70] Ironically, the discussion indicates that Soviet leaders were keenly aware of the many compelling arguments against intervention that were later brushed aside in December.

When Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov reported on the opening days of the meeting that "they expect a big action on our part, both by our ground and air forces," Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko pointed out that an entire division of the Afghan Army in Herat had defected to the rebels. "It would be one thing for us to take extreme measures if we could count on the Afghan Army," Gromyko said, "but quite another if it is unreliable and ineffective." Central Committee Secretary Andrei Kirilenko and Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin sharply criticized the Afghan Communist leadership. "Instead of sending our troops there," said Kosygin, "we should tell Taraki and Amin to change their tactics. They still continue to execute those people who disagree with them. They are killing almost all of the Parcham leaders, not only of the highest rank, but of the middle rank, too."

KGB Director Yuri Andropov was ambivalent on the first day, warning that "if we send troops, we shall surely be labeled an aggressor, but despite that we cannot afford to lose Afghanistan under any circumstances." On the second day, however, Andropov announced his firm opposition to intervention, prompting others to fall into line:

> ANDROPOV: Comrades, I have thought this issue over very thoroughly since yesterday and have concluded that we should consider very, very seriously whether it would make sense to send troops into Afghanistan. The economy is backward, the Islamic religion predominates, and nearly all of the rural population is illiterate. I do not think we can uphold the revolution in Afghanistan with the help of our bayonets. The idea is intolerable and we cannot risk it.
>
> GROMYKO: I fully support Comrade Andropov's view that we should exclude the dispatch of troops to Afghanistan. The Afghan Army is unreliable and our army

would become an aggressor. With whom will it fight? With the Afghan people! Our Army would have to shoot them! To be blunt, the Afghan leaders have made many mistakes and haven't got the support of their own people.

KIRILENKO: Tanks and armored vehicles cannot rescue them. I think that we must frankly tell them that. We must say that we will support them to the hilt, we shall give them all of the aid that we have promised to give, but we cannot send troops.

KOSYGIN: The negative factors would be enormous. Many countries would immediately go against us. There would be no positive factors.

KIRILENKO: We have given them everything, and what happened? Nothing has helped. They shoot innocent people, and then try to justify themselves by stating that people were shot under Lenin too. See what Marxists they are!

Once the consensus had been reached, Chairman Leonid Brezhnev, who had not previously taken part, gave his blessing to the decision at the final session. "The members have decided correctly," he declared. "It would not be fitting or appropriate for us to be drawn into this war." Reiterating his concern that the Afghan Army would be unreliable, Gromyko emphasized that

sending our troops would mean our occupation of Afghanistan. This would place us in a very difficult position in the international arena. We would ruin everything that we have constructed with such great difficulty, detente above all. The SALT II talks would be ruined. And this is the overriding issue for us now. There would be no meeting between Leonid Ilyich and Carter. It would be very doubtful that Giscard d'Estaing would come to us. Our relations with the Western countries, the F.R.G. among them, would be spoiled. That is why, despite the difficult situation, we cannot send troops.

Ustinov concurred in the decision but said that he planned to build up three divisions to full strength near the Afghan border "to demonstrate our readiness." He then requested and received permission to hold tactical exercises near the border.

Formally rejecting the request for troops at a meeting with Taraki in Moscow on March 20, Kosygin told the Afghan leader that "the entry of Soviet forces into the territory of Afghanistan would entail severe, multilevel consequences. Our common enemies eagerly await the moment when Soviet forces appear on Afghan soil. It would give them an excuse to put military forces opposed to you on Afghan territory."[71] But Moscow sent Taraki home with elaborate promises of more military and economic aid and a more active Soviet advisory role. The first Soviet helicopter gunships arrived in late March,[72] and a high-level aid mission followed in early April.

Herat strengthened Brzezinski's argument that the rebels enjoyed indigenous support and merited American help. In April, he relates in his memoirs, "I pushed a decision through the SCC to be more sympathetic to those Afghans who were determined to preserve their country's independence. Mondale was especially helpful in this, giving a forceful pep talk, mercilessly squelching the rather timid opposition of David Newsom."[73] Brzezinski deliberately avoided saying whether the upgraded program included weapons, since Moscow has long sought to justify its invasion by accusing Washington of destabilizing Af-

ghanistan during 1978 and 1979. Strictly speaking, one of his aides later told me, it was not an American weapons program, but it was designed to help finance, orchestrate, and facilitate weapons purchases and related assistance by others. Within weeks, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, and China were all increasing their assistance, according to secret American diplomatic messages captured in the takeover of the American Embassy in Teheran and later published.[74] In addition to the covert CIA role, American diplomats began to make relatively open contact with rebel leaders.[75]

On the Afghan political front, factionalism intensified after the Herat debacle. What had until then been a Khalq-Parcham split gradually became a three-way conflict between Amin, an anti-Amin Khalq clique centered around Taraki, and the Parchamites.

Amin's rival, Watanjar, fired the opening gun by persuading Taraki to make him Defense Minister. Taraki also named one of Watanjar's close allies, Sherjan Mazdooryar, Interior Minister, and another Khalqi leader who was at odds with Amin, Asadullah Sarwari, head of the secret police. These three, plus a leading Khalqi military officer already in the cabinet, Syed Gulabzoi, constituted the "Gang of Four" that later sided with Taraki in his showdown struggle with Amin. Amin reacted angrily to the emergence of this cabal by organizing an all-powerful "Homeland Defense Committee" under his chairmanship designed to neutralize the Defense Ministry. Then he pressured Taraki into surrendering the post of Prime Minister to him while retaining the presidency.

Exasperated by this growing infighting, Moscow made a thinly veiled effort to arrange for the return of Karmal from Prague. The second-ranking leader in the Czech Communist hierarchy, Vasil Bilak, ostensibly in Kabul for trade talks, came with specific proposals from Karmal for a coalition government. When Amin got wind of Bilak's real mission, "he was livid and made Bilak wait four days for a meeting," according to S. K. Singh, the Indian Ambassador, relating a conversation with the Afghan leader. "He knew that the Russians were behind it, and from then on, he was convinced they were out to get him."

Stepping up its efforts during the summer of 1979 to fortify the regime politically against the insurgent offensive, Moscow pushed for the creation of a broad-based "national democratic" leadership, headed by a non-Communist, in which Amin, Taraki, and Karmal would all play prominent roles. One of the King's former Prime Ministers, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, was the leading Soviet candidate to succeed Taraki as President. The Soviet troubleshooter who attempted to bring about such a transformation, Vasily Safronchuk, argued that the regime could survive only with a respected non-Communist figure as its leading spokeman. He received an enthusiastic response from Tajik and other non-Pushtun cabinet members who resented the domineering style of the Pushtun palace guard surrounding Amin. Taraki equivocated but did not reject his approach outright. At several stages during his backstage efforts, Safronchuk made a point of letting the American Embassy know what he was up to.[76] But "Amin wouldn't listen to proposals for a broader base," Safronchuk told me. "When we cited the success of the 'national democratic' approach elsewhere, he insisted the PDPA was different, that it was broad enough."[77]

Far from moving toward power sharing, Amin stepped up his drive against Taraki and the "Gang of Four." In a critical Politburo meeting on July 28, two key members defected to Amin's side, enabling him to displace Watanjar as Defense Minister. Surrounded by Amin loyalists, including the commander of the presidential guard, Daud Tarun, Taraki was no longer permitted to grant interviews to foreign journalists, who were routinely routed to Amin. Once close allies, Taraki and Amin engaged in an angry shouting match in August, the President's wife told Raja Anwar. Amin stalked out after Taraki objected to his appointment of his elder brother and his nephew to important government posts.[78]

At the insistence of Safronchuk, Amin stopped implementation of the Khalqi land reform program and made several other conciliatory gestures to religious dignitaries and tribal leaders. Nevertheless, the situation continued to deteriorate. Reports of Khalqi atrocities trickled in from the countryside, including the murders of several religious figures. Rebel forces showed new strength in attacks on government garrisons at Paktia and Gardez during May and June.

Amin's appeals to Pushtun nationalism became noticeably more strident after he became Prime Minister. His speeches were replete with imagery that depicted Pakistan's Pushtun-majority Northwest Frontier Province as part of a "Greater Afghanistan" reaching from the Oxus (Amu Dar'ya) River, bordering the Soviet Union, to the Abasin, the Pushtu word for the Indus River, which divides the Frontier Province from Punjab State.[79] Soviet officials viewed this Pushtun bias as one of the major obstacles to the formation of a stable "national democratic" regime. Amin's nationalism also led to another significant departure from the Soviet line after the Iranian Revolution. Moscow, which had initially opposed Khomeini, hastily warmed up to him once he assumed power. Amin, however, continued to castigate the Iranian leader not only in Marxist-Leninist terms but also in Afghan nationalist rhetoric, reflecting traditional Afghan antagonism toward Persians.[80]

Showdown in Kabul: The Murder of Taraki

By August, Soviet leaders were engaged in a major reappraisal of Soviet policy. Faced with mounting conflict between military and civilian intelligence representatives in Kabul, the Politburo Commission on Afghanistan summoned Lieutenant General L. N. Gorelov of the GRU and Lieutenant General B. S. Ivanov, the KGB station chief. "I expressed my firm opinion," Gorelov has related,

> that, despite numerous requests from the Afghan leadership, specifically Amin, it would not be expedient to increase our military presence in Afghanistan, which was experiencing a revolutionary crisis at that time, and particularly to commit our troops there. Lieutenant General Ivanov, who spoke in the commission following me, had a different, contrasting opinion both with respect to assessing the combat capability of the Afghan Army and on other complex processes underway in the

PDPA. Unfortunately, Ivanov's opinion and that of his colleagues seemed more convincing to our political leadership.[81]

In mid-August another high-level military mission was sent to Kabul to take stock, this time headed by General Ivan Pavlovskiiy, the Deputy Defense Minister. Before his departure for Kabul, Pavlovskiiy has recalled, he asked Defense Minister Ustinov "point blank, so to speak, 'Are we going to send troops to Afghanistan?' He responded abruptly, 'In no case, and if they ask you about this, answer them in the same vein.'"[82] The Soviet objective in late August was apparently to provide more effective military support, short of direct intervention, while helping Taraki and the "Gang of Four" to downgrade Amin, bring back Karmal, and carry out the Safronchuk plan for a more broad-based regime.

In the first stage of the Soviet game plan, Taraki would remain as president and general secretary of the PDPA, Karmal would become Prime Minister and deputy party secretary, Amin would go abroad as an ambassador, and half of the cabinet seats would go to non-Communists. Brezhnev presented this scenario to Taraki when the Afghan leader stopped off in Moscow on September 11 en route home from the summit of non-aligned states in Havana.

Presumably confident that Moscow had its ways of making Amin go along, Taraki agreed to play his part. But the "Gang of Four" had an agenda of its own based on the assumption that Amin would not surrender power peacefully. Asadullah Sarwari, the chief of the secret police, masterminded a plot to have Amin assassinated on his way to receive Taraki upon his return. The scheme was foiled when Sarwari's nephew, a KGB informer, tipped off Soviet agents, who in turn warned Amin just in time for him to take a back route to the airport.[83] The Soviet role in heading off the plot was revealing. While suspicious of Amin's possible U.S. ties and eager to displace him, the KGB was evidently seeking, at that stage, to avert a bloody showdown between Amin and his rivals with all of its predictable, destabilizing consequences. Similarly, Khalqi sources cited by Raja Anwar suggest that the GRU had remained carefully neutral in Amin's struggle with the "Gang of Four."[84]

Not surprisingly, Amin was on guard following Taraki's return and more determined than ever to force a showdown. Promptly confronting the President, he served notice that he was dismissing the "Gang of Four" from the cabinet. When Taraki objected and demanded that Amin accept an ambassadorial assignment for the sake of party unity, Amin exploded, shouting at Taraki that he was the one who should step down.

Precisely what happened next may never be known with certainty. According to credible Afghan sources,[85] Sarwari told friends that he persuaded Taraki to invite Amin for a reconciliation meeting over lunch on September 14, at which Amin was to be shot. Amin, smelling danger, declined, whereupon Sarwari suggested that Amin would come if Taraki invited Soviet Ambassador A. M. Puzanov to join in the meeting. As soon as he entered the palace, Amin would be tied up, locked in the bathroom, and blown up by a time bomb planted in the toilet. Puzanov, according to the Soviet version,[86] knew nothing of a plot to kill Amin. On the contrary, he was under instructions to seek a reconciliation

between Taraki and Amin. Puzanov, calling on Taraki in the afternoon, asked him to invite Amin to a meeting to be attended by the Ambassador and his military adviser. Taraki thereupon telephoned Amin, who finally agreed to come after the Ambassador spoke to him, personally guaranteeing his security.

Amin was unaware that Sarwari had instructed two of Taraki's bodyguards to shoot anyone who tried to approach the President's quarters. When Amin arrived at the palace, Amin's confidant, Daud Tarun, chief of the presidential secretariat, warned him that it might be dangerous to go inside. But Amin persisted. Tarun led the way up the stairs, only to be shot down outside Taraki's quarters while Amin and his bodyguards made a getaway.

Within hours, Amin assumed control, surrounding the palace with tanks. On the next day, the PDPA Central Committee accepted Taraki's "resignation" on grounds of "ill health." Amin also announced the dismissal of the "Gang of Four," but before he could arrest them, they went into hiding in the home of a KGB agent.[87] Amin, unable to find them, accused the Soviet Embassy of harboring them and summoned Ambassador Puzanov twice in the next two days to complain. Then he threw down the gauntlet to Moscow with a series of defiant moves. First, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, the Soviet choice for president in a coalition government, was executed in his prison cell. Next, on October 8, Amin's Foreign Minister, Shah Wali, openly complained of Soviet interference in Afghan affairs at a hastily scheduled meeting of Communist ambassadors in Kabul.

Significantly, Wali's invitation list included the Chinese and Yugoslav ambassadors, a calculated affront to Moscow, and excluded Soviet Ambassador Puzanov, who had been summoned to meet Amin at precisely the same time. Vasily Safronchuk, who attended in Puzanov's behalf, has recounted what happened. After charging that the "Gang of Four" had repeatedly attempted to assassinate Amin, Shah Wali "made a meaningful pause, looking at us with a sinister expression on his face, and said: 'To our great regret, the conspirators were assisted by the ambassador of a power friendly to Afghanistan, by A. M. Puzanov of the Soviet Union, who helped Taraki to entice the Prime Minister into a trap.'" Wali then declared that Puzanov had personally assured Amin of his security and that the Soviet Embassy was giving sanctuary to the "Gang of Four." Safronchuk, heatedly denying the charges, asked Shah Wali "whether he realized that his allegations could have irreparable adverse effects upon Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union."[88]

Amin followed up quickly with a formal request for Puzanov's replacement. Finally, despite Soviet pressures for clemency, Radio Kabul reported on October 10 that Taraki had died of a "serious illness." A White Paper issued after Karmal took power said that Taraki had been suffocated to death with a pillow by three Amin agents.

Amin's bloody rise to power immediately sharpened the debate in Moscow, crystallizing support for Soviet intervention. Shortly before his death, Andrei Gromyko told his son Anatolii that "Brezhnev was rudely shocked by the murder of this man who had not long before been his guest. It was a slap in the face that he felt he had to answer. He believed that Amin's group might enter into a conspiracy with the United States. Generally, in the Politburo, this was taken to

be a counterrevolutionary coup that would help Pakistan and Iran to destabilize our southern border."[89]

On another occasion, Gromyko said that "when we received the news that he had been brutally murdered in his own study, it was too much for Brezhnev to bear. He was simply beside himself. Taraki's death has to be taken into account when considering the steps taken by the Soviet Union after that."[90]

Did Amin Signal Washington?

When General Gorelov, the GRU chief, was summoned again to Moscow for a meeting in late October with Defense Minister Ustinov and several leading generals, he found a brick wall of hostility toward Amin. V. P. Zaplatin, the senior Soviet political adviser to the Afghan Army, who accompanied him, remembers that

> we were on the defensive because certain of our advisers and 'specialists' in Kabul had been overreacting to the difficulities in the PDPA. The refrain of their communications to Moscow was that everything is collapsing and that Amin was a threat to us. General Gorelov was noticeably disturbed and I, too, was disturbed. We expressed the opinion that it was possible to work with Amin, he was not an enemy of the Soviet Union, and we should take advantage of his great real capabilities to serve our interests.

The discussion "came around to the possibility of sending in troops," Zaplatin recalls, with the focus on "whether or not the Afghan Army was in a position to withstand insurgent forces. We said 'yes'."

Zaplatin gave Ustinov a letter "with five wax seals" for Brezhnev from Amin, who "requested a meeting and asked to be heard. It seemed to him, and not without reason, that non-objective information was getting to Moscow. Alas, they did not want to speak with him at such a crucial, critical juncture."[91]

Several weeks after this meeting, General Gorelov was removed from his Kabul post. Similarly, General Pavlovskiiy, who had cabled Ustinov that it would be "inexpedient" to send troops[92] and had urged high-level talks with Amin,[93] was ordered to cut short his mission in early November. Upon his return to Moscow, Pavlovskiiy found himself shut out of deliberations relating to Afghanistan and eventually demoted. By that time, the chief of military intelligence, Vasili Ivashutin, and the head of the armed forces Political Department (Glavpu*), General Ivan Yepishev, were firm advocates of intervention.[94]

The differences between Moscow and its GRU outpost in Kabul during the fall of 1979 were paralleled by a similar divergence in the assessments made by Washington and by American diplomats on the spot. When the Red Army invaded, the standard American explanation was that Moscow had to intervene to save a toppling Communist regime. However, Archer K. Blood, who was Chargé d'Affaires of the American Embassy beginning in mid-October, told me

**Glavnoye Politicheskoye Upravfeniye,* or Main Political Directorate.

in 1981 that "the regime was not in danger of falling. The whole Embassy agreed on this."[95] Reflecting on the Soviet invasion in a 1989 Oral History interview, Blood added that he was "surprised by the actual invasion for two reasons. One, I didn't think the government of Afghanistan was in that much danger of being toppled. I mean, they weren't very close to a military defeat. Also, it seemed to me they could have accomplished their purpose just by continuing what they were doing in December, which was infiltrating one thousand men or so a week. The only reason I can see for it is that they felt they had to get rid of Amin."[96]

The impression in the West that the regime was about to fall came from briefings for Western journalists conducted by the American Embassy in New Delhi. These briefings were based on reports from American diplomats in Kabul, since no foreign correspondents were getting into the country. "Our idea, of course," said Blood, "was to keep Afghanistan alive as a story to embarrass the Russians. Of course, we played up any successes of the resistance and any troubles that the government had."[97]

Blood denied reports that he was conducting secret negotiations with Amin during October and November designed to detach the Kabul regime from Moscow. Specifically, Blood assured me that he had only one meeting with Amin. In this conversation, which took place on October 27 and which lasted one hour, Amin reaffirmed his desire for a resumption of American aid, and "I told him he couldn't expect that until he could satisfy us about their role in Dubs's death. I was slightly encouraged that over time we could work out a modus vivendi if we could have got rid of Dubs's memory. He was no rockbound ideologue. I found him a guy in a very difficult position who was tough and was trying to survive."

Whatever Amin said to Blood, his public signals during the six weeks preceding the invasion increasingly suggested that he feared the worst from Moscow. Emphasizing repeatedly in speeches that Kabul welcomed aid from all sources, he made an explicit appeal to Washington in an interview with the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* on October 25, in which he said: "We want the United States of America to *consider realistically the affairs of this region* and further provide us with aid" (italics added). Islamabad informed the United States on October 31 that Amin was "talking with new enthusiasm about reciprocal visits." Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi, would go to Kabul, "probably in the latter half of November," the Afghan Foreign Minister, Shah Wali, would come to Islamabad, and finally the two Presidents would exchange visits.[98]

Another faint but significant signal was Amin's November 20 interview with the American author Rhea Talley Stewart, who later wrote that "he may have been sending a cry for help from the United States through our conversation. He said, to my surprise, that he would like to have American films on Afghan television, but no one had offered him any. He also said he would like to have another U.S. Ambassador in Kabul. He gave this interview an inordinate amount of press and radio publicity, also to my surprise."[99]

Amin pushed actively for Agha Shahi's visit, hinting that he was ready to shelve the "Pushtunistan" issue. "We got the impression that they were ready to

accept the Durand Line," Shahi told me later. He agreed to come on December 22 before proceeding to Saudi Arabia and Iran with President Zia Ul-Haq two days later. But shortly before his departure, according to Shahi's version, the Pakistan Air Force reported that Kabul was snowbound. Afghan Foreign Minister Shah Wali was waiting at the airport when he learned that his Pakistani visitor was not coming. On that same day, Agha Shahi said, he received a phone call from Shah Wali urging him to come on the very next day. "There was a note of urgency in his voice," Shahi recalled. "He said he was very disappointed. It was a plea to come without delay." Rejecting the plea, Shahi explained that he had to accompany President Zia on his trip and that his nephew was having a wedding on December 27. The Kabul mission was therefore rescheduled for December 29.[100]

Is there more to the story? Zia was clearly in no hurry to settle with Amin, since the Afghan communist threat had become the rationale for a steadily improving relationship with Washington that Zia hoped would lead to a resumption of military aid. Shahi has vigorously denied suggestions that the United States opposed the Kabul visit. In any case, whatever it was that Amin wanted to say to Pakistan and the United States will never be known. On December 24, the first Soviet airborne troops landed in Kabul, and on December 27, Amin was killed when Afghan and Soviet forces[101] stormed the palace where he was hiding.

The Decision to Intervene

There is no evidence to suggest that the United States and Pakistan had much interest in what Amin might have said. On the contrary, American policy makers were accelerating their effort to undercut him in late 1979 by building up the insurgency. In Soviet eyes, however, Amin's signals confirmed suspicions that were being carefully nurtured by his Afghan rivals. Watanjar, Mazdooryar, Sarwari, and Gulabzoi, under KGB protection in Kabul, were passing on a stream of damaging charges attributed to insiders allegedly privy to Amin's secrets.[102] "I am afraid we were taken in by all of the stuff about Amin and the CIA coming in from our Kabul station," recalled former KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin.[103] Babrak Karmal and other leading Parchamites had come to Moscow after they were ousted from their ambassadorial posts, "so they were right there during the crucial period, seeing their friends in our agencies and in the staff of our Central Committee, every day," said Vladimir Plastun of the Institute of Oriental Studies, citing firsthand accounts.

"What we feared," said Valentin Falin, then Deputy Director of the Central Committee's International Department, "was that he would do a Sadat. At some point after the death of Taraki, I can't remember exactly when, we had information that Amin was planning to do what Sadat had done. He was looking for a way to justify a break with us, leading to the expulsion of our advisers. But don't take this, please, as a justification of what we did."[104] Raymond L. Garthoff, recounting conversations with Central Committee members in 1980,

writes that he was struck by the "frequency and weight" given to the Sadat scenario.[105]

In contrast to the earlier division between military and civilian intelligence assessments, the GRU and the KGB were in agreement by November that Amin was dangerously unreliable. The only issue left to be resolved was whether Soviet forces would have to be introduced in order to install a new regime. The forceful director of KGB foreign intelligence, Vladimir Khrychkov, who was to play a key role in Afghan policy throughout the war, argued vociferously that Amin and his support network in the armed forces could be completely destroyed only if Soviet forces occupied the country.

The nominal responsibility for Afghan policy-making rested with the Politburo Commission on Afghanistan, consisting of KGB chief Andropov, Foreign Minister Gromyko, B. N. Ponomarev, Director of the International Department of the Central Committee, and Defense Minister Ustinov.

According to a document discovered by Raymond Garthoff, Andropov joined in signing a memorandum submitted to the Politburo by the Commission on October 29 expressing deep concerns over Amin. The memorandum declared:

> Recently signs have been noted that the new leadership of Afghanistan is intentionally conducting a "more balanced policy" in relations with the Western powers. It is well known, in particular, that representatives of the United States on the basis of their contacts with the Afghans have come to the conclusion that potentialities [exist] for changing the political line of Afghanistan to directions favorable to Washington.
>
> Amin's conduct in the sphere of relations with the USSR more and more distinctly reveals his insincerity and duplicity.[106]

By all accounts, Andropov continued to oppose Soviet intervention until the eleventh hour, reaffirming the same arguments that he had advanced after the Herat uprising in March. According to Oleg Kalugin, Andropov held out until early December, when Khrychkov finally persuaded him that there was no way to get rid of Amin without the presence of Soviet forces.

Andropov's "greatest mistake," writes Georgy Arbatov, one of his close confidants, was that he "put too much faith in Babrak Karmal." He did not expect a long intervention to be necessary because he thought that Karmal, as a more moderate leader than Amin, would find it much easier to stabilize the Afghan Communist regime. What Andropov failed to realize, Arbatov concludes, was that "the only way Karmal could have become leader of the country was with the assistance of foreign bayonets."[107]

According to Oleg Kalugin, it was Andropov's "very close" political alliance with Defense Minister Ustinov that ultimately forced him to give up his opposition to intervention. "Ustinov was under strong pressure from the party dogmatists in the GRU and the Political Department, and Andropov was under pressure from Ustinov. After all, Andropov was a party man, a very adaptable person who knew when to go with the political tide." Another KGB official told of a meeting where opinion on intervention was "divided, fifty-fifty. Andropov ex-

pressed doubts but did not take a strong or clear stand. He knew it was a mistake but felt boxed in."[108]

Once Andropov gave up his opposition to intervention, Gromyko quickly fell into line. The only other significant holdouts on the Politburo were Prime Minister Kosygin and Central Committee Secretary Andrei Kirilenko. Edmund Stevens, the veteran Moscow correspondent of the *Times* of London, believed that Kosygin's illness in the weeks leading up to the decision was of critical importance. Citing conversations with Kosygin and Kirilenko, Stevens told me that if Kosygin "had been well and had attended these meetings, it might have made a difference. He foresaw exactly what would happen, and he had a strong personality." The fact that Kosygin did not sign the minutes of the crucial December 12 meeting may be attributable to his illness. But "we knew that he was very much against it, very much against it," Falin declared. Kirilenko, Stevens said, was "violently against it" but was pressured into signing.[109]

Some of the senior professional military leaders who held key positions in 1979 now contend that they, too, were against the decision to send forces with a combat mission but that Ustinov did not convey their views to the Politburo. Skeptics have dismissed this contention as a self-serving effort to deflect criticism of the armed forces and pressures for cuts in the defense budget. But the evidence is persuasive that the Defense Ministry was indeed sharply divided. At one extreme, key members of the General Staff were cool to sending Soviet forces, favoring a small force, barred from participation in combat, if a force was sent. At the other, Ustinov and the powerful party commissars in the Ministry, Ivashutin of the GRU and Yepishev of Glavpu, were committed to intervention.

Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who has since died, recalled a meeting that he attended in Ustinov's office in early December 1979, together with Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, then Chief of Staff, and General Valentin I. Varennikov, then Commander of Ground Forces. "We told Ustinov that our troops wouldn't resolve any of the problems in Afghanistan," he said. "He asked us, 'Well, would it be possible to stabilize the regime there without our troops there?' We replied that 'perhaps, if our troops were stationed in Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad, and Kandahar, it would help to stabilize the regime, but they shouldn't fight. Let the Afghans do the fighting themselves.'"[110]

In a three-hour conversation, Varennikov spoke contemptuously of Ustinov as a man who was "unwilling to question Brezhnev and those around him." Varennikov told me that the General Staff "as a whole felt that troops should not be sent right away, that we should watch the situation there evolve to see if our intervention was really necessary and would be accepted by the people." When and if troops were sent, he said, "we favored what we called the 'garrison variant,' that is, our forces would be confined to garrisons and would not get involved in combat."[111] Varennikov, in an *Ogonyok* interview, blamed Babrak Karmal for "constantly pressing us to get into combat. Unfortunately, we gave way to his pressure and permitted ourselves to be dragged into a prolonged war."[112] Karmal retorted that it was the Red Army high command that introduced "offensive tactics, the testing of new types of weapons, and bombings for the purpose of provocation, which happened against my will."[113]

Assessing the wide range of global and regional factors that governed the decision to intervene, Varennikov emphasized the belief in the Politburo that "Amin might go to the Americans and let them replace the electronic intelligence bases they had lost in Iran with new ones along the Soviet-Afghan border, capable of monitoring our missile tests in Central Asia. Obviously, that would have put the U.S.S.R. in a very difficult situation."[114] Several other Soviet officials told me that fears of U.S. intelligence bases in Afghanistan gained credibility after open discussion in the American press of the possibility of obtaining such facilities by ousting the Communist regime in Kabul.[115]

In its report on the 1979 decision, the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet singled out the impact of the revolution in Iran as the primary focus of Soviet anxieties. "There was some idea," the report concluded, "that certain quarters in the United States were intending to take revenge for the loss of their position following the fall of the Shah's regime. The facts indicated that such a train of events was possible."[116] Soviet fears of direct American intervention in Iran rapidly increased during the hostage crisis. Even strong critics of the decision to intervene, such as G. A. Trofimenko of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute, now argue that Moscow was understandably worried about the possible introduction of U.S. forces into Iran. "What would the Soviet Union have been left to do," he asked, "if the U.S. had intervened in Iran, as was being planned at that time in Washington? Impassively look on as the Pentagon led its troops up to the immediate borders of the U.S.S.R?"[117]

When the issue of intervention first arose in March after the Herat uprising, Gromyko had argued strongly that sending forces to Afghanistan would disrupt what was then a promising opportunity for detente with the West. But by early December, said Vadim Zagladin, "the impression in the Politburo was that detente was at a dead end, that the United States was hardening toward us, requiring a response." Zagladin pointed, in particular, to receding prospects for U.S. congressional ratification of the SALT II agreement and to the crystallization of U.S. plans for the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe.

Senate rejection of the SALT agreement appeared certain in Soviet eyes after the Armed Services Committee bitterly condemned it on November 30. Moscow also viewed the missile deployments as inevitable after West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt won support for them at the convention of his ruling Social Democratic Party on December 5. At the very time when a decision on Afghanistan was rapidly approaching, West European opposition to the deployments collapsed at a meeting of NATO defense ministers on December 11. Then the NATO Council formally announced on December 12 that the United States would deploy 464 Tomahawk cruise missiles and 108 Pershing II rocket launchers. According to Georgiy Kornienko, then First Deputy Foreign Minister, the NATO announcement led directly to a Politburo meeting later on the same day. "It was no accident that the Afghanistan issue was finally settled on that particular day, in the early evening, after Moscow learned about what NATO had done," Kornienko writes. "All of the arguments previously made about the negative impact in the West suddenly became irrelevant. People felt that relations were already spoiled, so there was nothing much left to lose."[118]

What really governed the decision to intervene and precisely who was responsible remains a controversial and politically sensitive issue in Moscow. In its 1989 report, the Supreme Soviet inquiry committee concluded that the Politburo "did not even assemble in its full complement to discuss this matter." Brezhnev, Ustinov, Andropov, and Gromyko met in secret, "circumventing the supreme organs of state power" and presenting the rest of the Politburo, the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet "with a fait accompli."[119] However, a two-paragraph, top-secret report on the meeting, declassified in 1992, suggests that nine of the fourteen Politburo members[120] may have attended the meeting. Presumably to ensure secrecy, the report was handwritten by Konstantin Chernenko, then Brezhnev's most trusted aide. Signatures of the nine participants were written diagonally across the face of the text. Three more members signed on December 25 and 26.[121] Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, who were then candidate members, not full members, have stated that they were not present and learned of the decision from radio and newspaper reports.[122]

Entitled "On the Situation in 'A'," the report consists of a resolution cryptically recording approval of the "considerations and measures proposed by Yu. V. Andropov, D. F. Ustinov, and A. A. Gromyko," authorizing them to "make necessary adjustments" to carry out these measures and instructing them to report back to the Politburo "in due time concerning progress in fulfilment of the projected measures."[123]

One of the Central Committee staff members who was present, R. A. Ulyanovsky, a deputy director of the International Department in charge of Southwest Asia, agreed to convey answers to a written list of my questions, submitted through a mutual friend, concerning the meeting.[124] Gromyko chaired the meeting, Ulyanovsky said, with Ustinov next to him at the head of a long table. Andropov sat off to the side along the back wall. Ten or eleven Central Committee advisers were lined up at a distance along the opposite wall. After half an hour of reports from several of the advisers, with occasional prompting from Gromyko, Brezhnev shuffled in. Gromyko held him by the arm to give him support as he tottered around the room, embracing everyone present. Several times, he almost fell. Then Gromyko helped him into his chair, whispering audibly in his ear that new information had been presented showing "how bad Amin was, how adventurist, how unpredictable." Brezhnev sat in wooden silence for three or four minutes. Abruptly, he stood up, pounded his fists on the table, muttered, "*Neporyadichnii chekovek!*" ("dirty man!" or "indecent person!"), and left the room.

Brezhnev's intimates depict him as an unstable alcoholic who blundered into the Afghanistan decision at a time when his health was rapidly failing. He was "a very emotional man, easily moved to tears," said Gromyko, which was related to his alcoholism. Asked if the Soviet leader has a serious drinking problem, Gromyko replied: "The answer is yes, yes, yes." Gromyko recalled saying once to him that "'socialism and the boozing of vodka by the people don't go together. Why is the Politburo silent on this?' Brezhnev listened patiently and replied that 'the Russians have always drunk vodka. They can't get by without it.' He

wouldn't agree to any further discussion. He particularly emphasized the words: 'They can't get by without it'"[125]

"Let us put it charitably and say that his mind was not always clear," added Vadim Zagladin. "It was difficult for him to think through the ramifications of a complex issue like Afghanistan. The truth is that he was not able to work properly as General Secretary after 1977, and by 1979, he was in bad shape, easily swayed by those around him."

Brezhnev's hard-line ideological éminence gris, Mikhail Suslov, argued that the collapse of the Afghan revolution would imperil Communist regimes everywhere, and it was Suslov, in the end, who gave the green light for the invasion. Before signing the papers authorizing implementation of the December 12 decision, Brezhnev asked whether Suslov, who had not attended the meeting, had given his approval.[126]

Confronted by Suslov's ideological dominance, dissenters in the International Department of the Central Committee who questioned the decision were intimidated. One of them was the Director of the Department, B. N. Ponomarev. "We knew he was against it, he grumbled about it frequently," said his personal assistant, Anatoliy Chernyayev. "But what could he do?"[127] "He was definitely against it," added Karen Brutents, a deputy head of the Department. "Many of us were." In early December Ponomarev set up a working group on Afghanistan headed by Brutents, who had accompanied him twice to Kabul. Suddenly, on December 18, Brezhnev's foreign policy adviser, Andrey Alexandrov-Agentov, asked Brutents to submit his report without further delay. "We emphasized the practical side," Brutents recalled. "We said that it simply wouldn't work, that we could never impose our military control over a country like Afghanistan. Of course, we didn't know what had already happened in the Politburo." Underlining the fact that Alexandrov-Agentov called him six days after the December 12 meeting, Brutents suggests that last minute doubts persisted in Brezhnev's inner circle until the first Soviet airborne forces landed on December 24.[128]

Assessed in the light of what was happening in Kabul and Moscow, the Soviet invasion was clearly not the first step in the expansionist master plan of a united leadership. Rather, it was the reckless last act of a narrow Stalinist ingroup that was starting to lose its grip even in 1979. The divisions within the Soviet armed forces and intelligence services revealed in this narrative foreshadowed broader divisions over the invasion that were to surface later. Brezhnev and his advisers were forced to act in secrecy precisely because they knew that these divisions existed. Not surprisingly, however, the world reacted to the invasion with shock and alarm. As the first case of a naked violation of established frontiers by Soviet forces, it provided powerful new credibility to warnings that Moscow would seek to use Afghanistan as a springboard for seizing control of Persian Gulf oil and for establishing military beachheads on the Indian Ocean.

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II

1980–1981

THE LAST DAYS OF BREZHNEV

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2

SOVIET OCCUPATION, AFGHAN RESISTANCE, AND THE AMERICAN RESPONSE

Selig S. Harrison

Within days of the invasion, President Carter made a series of symbolic gestures to express American outrage, invoking economic sanctions against the Soviet Union and canceling American participation in the 1980 Olympics scheduled to take place in Moscow. Within weeks he stepped up long-gestating plans for a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) in the Persian Gulf.

No longer skittish about a direct American role in providing weapons support to the Afghan resistance, Carter also gave the CIA the green light for an American-orchestrated covert assistance program to be financed in part by congressional appropriations and in part with Saudi Arabian help. By 1991 the covert aid influx was to surpass $2.8 billion in American and Saudi funding. It started out, however, at relatively modest levels of $30 million in 1980 and $50 million in 1981. During these two years, Pakistan agreed to serve as a conduit for the gradually expanding aid, but only after a protracted internecine policy struggle and unabashed bargaining with the United States. The price exacted from Washington was a U.S. commitment to provide $1.5 billion in military aid for Zia's armed forces. Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, who wanted to limit the U.S. role in Afghanistan and to promote a settlement, lost his job in this struggle.

It was during these same two years that Moscow made its first cautious overtures for a negotiated withdrawal. This shifting Soviet posture enabled Shahi to press successfully for a United Nations mediation role despite American disapproval. But these early Soviet peace feelers were overshadowed by brutal

Red Army offensives in Afghanistan, an increasingly angry Afghan response, and an exodus of refugees into Pakistan that exceeded 2 million by the end of 1981.

A Stillborn U.S. Peace Initiative

Carter was caught during the immediate aftermath of the invasion in a continuation of the tug-of-war between Brzezinski and Vance over Soviet policy. Brzezinski was working single-mindedly for a policy that would rally world condemnation of the Soviet Union and make the occupation as costly as possible for Moscow. As the leader of an American delegation to Pakistan, he turned up at the Khyber Pass on February 3, 1980, where he posed for photographers at a Pakistani border outpost with a Chinese-made submachine gun pointed symbolically at the Afghan border. The Brzezinski mission was designed to demonstrate American support for Pakistan in the face of the Soviet military presence next door and to pave the way for Zia's cooperation in channeling covert Afghan aid. Vance, while not opposed to what Brzezinski was doing, felt that simultaneous diplomatic efforts should be made to negotiate a Soviet withdrawal, since the Red Army buildup in Afghanistan and the American response were still in the formative stages.

Vance wanted to link withdrawal with a broader "mutual restraint" agreement covering both Iran and Pakistan. On February 8, with Carter's approval, he wrote to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko proposing a dialogue based on the premise that "if there was restraint on both sides and respect for the independence and territorial integrity of the states in the region, our respective interests need not lead to confrontation."[1] When Gromyko responded favorably, Vance asked Carter for the authority to arrange a meeting. He drafted a letter to Gromyko suggesting the broad outlines of the proposed agreement. Brzezinski strongly opposed the very idea of a high-level exchange with Moscow so soon after the invasion, arguing that it would "project an image of uncertainty that would confuse our allies." In particular, he writes, "I pointed out to the President that the proposed draft addressed itself to such matters as neutrality for Pakistan and Iran, with whom we had not consulted. . . . I said I failed to see what U.S. interest would be served by making the Soviet Union in effect the coguarantor of neutrality in the Persian Gulf region, especially after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan."[2] Carter finally sided with Brzezinski. In early March he instructed Vance not to pursue his initiative further.

What he had in mind, Vance later told me, was an agreement that would have barred the introduction of combat forces or "mutually threatening bases or facilities by either superpower in Iran or Pakistan."[3] Such an understanding, he believed, would be a necessary accompaniment to a Soviet withdrawal, since Moscow had repeatedly expressed fears concerning U.S. intentions in Southwest Asia, especially with respect to Iran. By the same token, the United States pointed to the threat of a Soviet invasion of Iran as the principal justification for the development of the Rapid Deployment Force.

Reflecting on the Vance plan, Harold H. Saunders, who was then Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs, observed that "countless contingency plans after Afghanistan did focus on what we would do if the Soviet Union introduced forces in Iran, and the idea of U.S. intervention was one contingency considered. So something like his idea would have been a good way of reducing the possibility of such a confrontation." But Iran and Pakistan, Saunders added, were "two different stories. The realities of Khomeini's Iran were such that no one would ever have thought of trying to reestablish U.S. bases there. It was not ours to neutralize." By contrast, in Pakistan, "we would have been giving something up. That's why his idea got nowhere. In the aftermath of the Afghan invasion, there was at least a theoretical possibility that Pakistan would invite us in."[4]

Vance was directly questioning the prevailing assumption that Moscow was hell-bent on moving militarily to the "warm waters" of the Indian Ocean. The negotiations that he proposed could conceivably have delayed and eventually reduced, or reversed, the far-flung U.S. military response to the invasion then gaining momentum.

As early as August 1977, a presidential policy review had recommended the creation of a Rapid Deployment Force that could react quickly to contingencies in the Gulf. "Everybody said it was a nice idea," recalled Gary Sick, who directed Gulf policy-making during this period in the National Security Council (NSC). "But absolutely nothing happened until the invasion of Afghanistan. Then, between that date and the end of 1980, a tremendous number of things happened. Congress was contacted, detailed agreements for access were reached with countries in the region, money began to be spent, forces actually moved. If it had not been for the invasion, you would not see any RDF the way you see it today."[5] In a wry comment on the preoccupation with oil that drove the postinvasion policy debate, Thomas P. Thornton, then the NSC director of South Asian affairs, commented that "careful measurements were made on maps throughout Washington to determine how much closer the Soviet Union was to the Straits of Hormuz and other exotic sites in the petro-world."[6]

Outlining the "Carter Doctrine" in his State of the Union address on January 23, 1980, the President designated Southwest Asia as the "third strategic zone" for Western security, on a par with Europe and Asia. He termed the invasion "the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War." Then Carter delivered his warning that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Under the umbrella of the U.S. Central Command, with a mission embracing nineteen countries of Southwest Asia and the Horn of Africa, the Rapid Deployment Force was to grow into a $45 billion per year enterprise[7] during the decade that followed. It was the Central Command that provided the nucleus for the American military machine deployed against Iraq in the 1991 Persian Gulf War over Kuwait. In the space of just a decade, however, fears of a Soviet threat had been forgotten, and Moscow joined in the anti-Iraq coalition.

Zia's Great Expectations

The American bargaining with Pakistan that began with the Brzezinski mission in February 1980 was conditioned by two critical factors that predated the Soviet invasion: the strategic intelligence connection and the cutoff of U.S. economic aid that resulted from the controversy over Islamabad's nuclear program.

Zia had acquired powerful leverage in his dealings with the United States by agreeing in 1979 to permit the installation of U.S. electronic monitoring facilities in northern border areas adjacent to Soviet Central Asian missile testing and anti-satellite launch sites. One of the most serious problems posed for American intelligence agencies by the fall of the Shah in January 1979 was the loss of critical monitoring facilities in Iran. Neighboring Pakistan was a natural place to turn for alternative locations, not only because it had geographic advantages of proximity to Central Asia similar to those that Iran offered but because relations between the CIA and the ISI had grown increasingly warm following Zia's ouster of Bhutto and the advent of a military regime. Islamabad was nervous about where the installations would be and how they would be camouflaged but eventually granted permission after protracted negotiations.

Ironically, it was in April, while the negotiations on the monitoring facilities were under way, that Congress invoked the Symington amendment and cut off aid to Pakistan in response to growing evidence of a militarily focused nuclear program. But this action did not get in the way of the new intelligence partnership. "It was very calculating on their part," said Harold Saunders. "They were making an investment in their long-term relationship with the United States, building in a fundamental obligation." For the ISI, there was also an immediate payoff in the form of shared intelligence on Soviet and Afghan Communist military activities in Afghanistan.

Congressional leaders assumed that the aid cutoff would lead Zia to curtail the military aspects of his nuclear program. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Arthur Hummell, disagreed, arguing "as strenuously as I could, to no avail, that we needed aid for leverage and would be out of the non-proliferation game until we resumed the aid program."[8] Zia, in any case, was proceeding full steam ahead with his nuclear efforts on the eve of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979. The Pakistani-American relationship, already strained, hit rock bottom when mobs organized by Islamic fundamentalist groups burned the American Embassy in Islamabad in November.

For Pakistan, like Iran, the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 posed more immediate problems and dangers than for more distant countries. The immediate escalation of the Afghan refugee influx imposed strains on the social and economic fabric of the border areas that were to intensify during the years ahead. As for the security threat posed by the Soviet presence next door, many foreign observers felt, as I did, that there was a more serious possibility of Soviet support for separatist movements in Pakistan than of direct military aggression.[9] Zia, however, depicted direct aggression as a clear and present danger. He skillfully used the Soviet menace to rally popular support for his regime. At the

same time, he was quick to perceive that the Soviet presence gave him a new rationale for American military aid.

"They were far ahead of us in recognizing what Afghanistan meant and anticipating what it could come to mean over time," commented John J. Reagan, who was CIA Station Chief in Pakistan from June 1977 until July 1981. "They saw clearly that this was something that would get bigger and bigger." Thus, Reagan added, it was "quite predictable" that Pakistan would reject the offer of $400 million in economic and military aid made by Brzezinski in February. "They had much, much bigger expectations."[10]

Zia peremptorily dismissed the $400 million aid offer on one occasion as "peanuts"[11] and on another as "not even a drop in the ocean."[12] In a conversation in Islamabad shortly after Brzezinski's departure, he told me bluntly that "if the United States is going to help Pakistan, let it come whole hog. If I accept such a meaningless level of aid, I will only provoke the Russians without really getting a defense against them. I will burn my bridges! Do you really want me to do that?" Pointing to the $3 billion that the U.S. Congress had just voted for Egypt, Zia declared heatedly that Pakistan was entitled to "no less, and in terms of the threat that we face, even more."[13]

The official rationale for rejecting the 1980 aid offer was that the United States refused to accompany its projected aid with a NATO-type treaty that would have automatic applicability in the event of either Indian or Soviet aggression.

The United States said it was not necessary to go beyond its 1959 mutual security agreement with Islamabad, which requires Washington to "take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as may be mutually agreed upon" in the event of armed aggression against Pakistan "by any country controlled by international Communism." In addition to the absence of a provision explicitly covering India, Pakistan objected to the fact that the agreement required only consultation, in contrast to the legally binding commitment contained in the NATO treaty.[14]

Ambassador Hummell minimized the controversy over the 1959 agreement, observing that "while they pushed the idea of a commitment on India and a NATO-type treaty, they knew very well they wouldn't get anything like that. They were genuinely concerned about provoking the Russians." What they were really after, according to David McGiffert, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who accompanied Brzezinski, was "tanks and high-performance aircraft like the F-16. It was perfectly clear that their orientation as far as equipment was concerned was what would be useful on the Indian border. They weren't very interested in the sort of thing we thought they needed to secure the Afghan border."[15]

The Brzezinski mission was a probing exercise by both sides in which Pakistan laid on the table for the first time what it would expect from the United States in return for serving as a conduit for large-scale aid to the Afghan resistance. In addition to sophisticated military hardware, Islamabad wanted Washington to forget about the nuclear issue. "We made the connection between Afghanistan and the nuclear question clear many times, in many ways," re-

called Sultan Mohammed Khan, then Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States.[16]

Even at this stage, it was apparent that significant differences were developing over Afghanistan policy in Islamabad between the ruling generals and influential civilian officials led by Foreign Minister Agha Shahi. Zia had made clear to me that he was enthusiastic about the idea of a "whole-hog" commitment to play the role of "frontline state"—if the price was right. The tenor of my conversation with Shahi in February 1980 was very different.[17] I had known him during his years as Ambassador to China, and he spoke frankly, confiding his doubts about getting too close to the United States.

Shahi saw "no viable basis for an alliance relationship" because American public and official opinion was "too uncertain, too confused, too much influenced by India. We would never know where we stand because every time you have an election, policies change. The only stable relationships you have are with NATO, Israel, perhaps Japan." When I suggested that a Republican victory in the coming fall presidential election might lead to a more uninhibited U.S. military aid commitment, he replied that "it would be more prudent for Pakistan not to get too deeply involved." The United States, he said, should reschedule Pakistan's debt, provide the proffered $400 million exclusively in the form of economic aid and forget about military aid unless it was prepared to conclude a treaty guaranteeing Pakistan's security against India. "The truth is," he exploded, "that the United States doesn't respect us. It wants us to accept satellite status. We know very well how you used the Shah to try to keep us in line."

In passing, Shahi also made several pointed comments about Afghanistan that did not seem as significant to me at the time as they did in the context of his later policy struggles with Zia and his fellow generals. He considered a Soviet invasion of Pakistan "very, very unlikely." He had reason to believe on the basis of diplomatic soundings that some "very powerful people" in Moscow regarded the invasion as a mistake and favored a Soviet withdrawal if a nonaligned coalition government could be established in Kabul. The Soviet Union would insist on an agreement barring aid to anti-Communist resistance groups, Shahi said, but this would be an acceptable price if the Red Army did withdraw.

The Red Army Under Fire

The initial operational goal of the Red Army in Afghanistan was a limited one: to establish a secure military environment for the Kabul regime by consolidating control over the cities, roads, airports, and other underpinnings of the government infrastructure. As a leading military historian of the war, David C. Isby, has observed, "[T]he Soviets were seeking a long-term solution that would be primarily political, economic and diplomatic in nature. Casualties and expenditure were to be minimized . . . and fighting was to be kept to a relatively low intensity."[18]

But Moscow soon found that the ferocity of the Afghan response to the invasion made it impossible to accomplish its mission without wide-ranging

combat operations. The Soviet presence had rapidly transformed the character and the scope of the Afghan resistance struggle. What had previously been a significant but diffuse insurgency, based on scattered local opposition to centralized rule and on religious antagonism to a Marxist-Leninist regime, had now become a broader nationalist resistance against a foreign occupation force.

Memoirs of the first months of the war by Soviet generals[19] and Afghan resistance leaders[20] alike depict a Red Army that attempted to stay in its garrisons but was drawn into combat by resistance offensives. The first major Soviet operation came in March 1980, when guerrilla forces in the Kunar valley were on the verge of capturing Asadabad, capital of Nangrahar Province, then controlled by the Afghan Army. The Soviet Fortieth Army launched its attack with indiscriminate shelling of the valley that not only forewarned the guerrillas but also accelerated the flow of refugees to Pakistan. Armored regiments, lumbering up the valley's main road, succeeded in relieving and resupplying the beleaguered Asadabad garrison. Since no attempt was made to destroy the guerrilla forces or to block their withdrawal, however, they promptly resumed their offensive as soon as the Soviet forces had left.

The Red Army at this stage was attempting to use conventional textbook tactics that had been devised to defeat NATO in western Europe and Chinese troops on the plains of Manchuria. Soviet motorized rifle and tank units often conducted large-scale mechanized offensives that looked like parade-ground exercises. The Asadabad offensive typified numerous cases in which Soviet forces moved in clumsy formations completely unsuited to the rough, mountainous terrain. These mechanized forces were confined to the few good roads in Afghanistan, where they were vulnerable to mines and to harassment by guerrillas operating out of concealed mountain redoubts. Hiding behind boulders, an Afghan resistance unit of forty men, armed with three RPG-7 antitank guns, crippled an entire motorized battalion in a celebrated 1980 victory in Paktia Province. The Soviet conscripts never left their vehicles. They kept firing until their ammunition was exhausted and were then massacred.[21] Surprisingly, Soviet motorized offensives in 1980 and 1981 often lacked effective close air support, which reportedly demoralized Afghan Army forces assigned to play a vanguard role in combined operations.

Soviet convoys were frequently overwhelmed in ambushes during this period. A British journalist witnessed a typical ambush of Soviet forces on the road from Kabul to Jalalabad in which a band of eighteen Afghans destroyed a fuel truck in a convoy escorted by two Soviet motorized companies. As the British observer reported, the Afghans had so ineptly positioned their ambush force that an infantry flank attack could have surrounded and destroyed them, but the mechanized forces adhered rigidly to their standard, road-bound tactics, "driving up and down the highway, firing their turret armament, with the motorized riflemen blazing away through their gunports with few hits until the convoy moved on, leaving the blazing fuel truck."[22]

Despite the bravery shown by the resistance groups and the ineffectual Soviet military performance in the early years of the war, the limitations and weaknesses of the resistance were apparent from the start. With certain notable

exceptions, most resistance attacks were staged haphazardly by locally based groups with little coordination among field commanders or between field commanders and the seven Pakistan-based resistance parties.

Throughout the war, the divided resistance groups were never able to establish a parallel government in a liberated zone comparable to Yenan in the Chinese civil war. Ahmad Shah Massoud in the Pansjer valley was the only resistance commander who followed up his military victories by establishing parallel local government machinery. Time after time the resistance groups failed in their efforts to set up a unified military command structure and an effectively centralized national political alliance. The nature of the counterinsurgency challenge confronted by Moscow thus differed fundamentally from the challenge that was presented by the National Liberation Front in Vietnam, the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, and other successful guerrilla movements. It was because they did not face an institutionalized political or military challenge that Soviet and Afghan Army forces were initially content to limit their objectives to defending urban centers, transportation networks, and forward garrisons.

To be sure, as the resistance received better equipment and grew in strength, Soviet objectives were expanded to include punishing and, in some cases, depopulating localities that helped the resistance, destroying weapons stockpiles, and cutting off supply lines from Pakistan and Iran. But since the resistance did not seek to secure and occupy territory, it was not necessary for the Red Army to emulate the costly "clear-and-hold" strategy pursued by the United States during the climactic phase of its Vietnam involvement.

Soviet generals were quick to learn that the Afghan Army could not play the ambitious role they had originally envisaged. General N. G. Tep-Grigoriants, chief of the Operational Group of the Turkestan Military District in Afghanistan, told an interviewer after the Soviet withdrawal that "we were operating under an order that combat operations on the territory of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan were to be conducted by the Afghan People's Army, and we were only to support them. But in practice . . . the Afghan Army could not put up a genuine fight. The Afghan units were rarely full strength, generally 52 to 54 percent. We were not able to count on them seriously. So our soldiers marched first, and behind them followed the Afghan soldiers."[23]

Islamabad and the Resistance: Divide and Rule

The tensions between Pakistani-based resistance exile factions and local field commanders inside the country were reinforced by the same ethnic and tribal divisions that have impeded the emergence of a coherent Afghan nationalism since the seventeenth century. To complicate matters further, the relatively recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism introduced a new and even more debilitating element of internecine strife into Afghan society: the conflict between Islamic fundamentalist resistance factions and rival resistance elements led by traditional Islamic dignitaries and tribal chieftains.

Inspired by the pan-Islamic Muslim Brotherhood, with its roots in Egypt, and by orthodox Wahabi groups in Saudi Arabia, the Afghan fundamentalists had a dedicated but negligible organization prior to the Communist takeover and the Soviet occupation. They were arrayed against the monarchy; against the entire traditional Muslim clergy, identified with the Hanafi school of Islamic law and various Sufi sects; and against both Western-oriented and Communist modernizers alike. Based primarily in ethnic minorities, especially the Tajiks, they were opposed to Pushtun domination, and they had alienated the powerful Pushtun tribal hierarchy by calling for the abolition of tribalism as incompatible with their conception of a centralized Islamic state. Despite harsh repression, the fundamentalists, who numbered perhaps fifteen hundred, survived as an underground movement until 1973, when most of them fled to Pakistan. There they forged an alliance with Pakistani fundamentalist groups and Pakistani intelligence agencies that was to become increasingly important in the context of the Afghan conflict.

Daoud had long been the principal instigator of the irredentist Afghan demand for the establishment of an independent, Afghan-linked "Pushtunistan" in Pushtun areas of Pakistan that had originally belonged to Afghanistan prior to their annexation by the British Raj. Kabul had given money and arms to Pushtun dissidents in the Northwest Frontier Province, and in retaliation, Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had unleashed anti-Daoud commandos in dissident ethnic minority areas of Afghanistan. "Two can play at the same game," Bhutto told me in late 1974. "We know where their weak points are, just as they know ours. The non-Pushtuns there hate Pushtun domination. So we have our ways of persuading Daoud not to aggravate our problems."[24] Soon after, in early 1975, ISI-trained units staged their first raids against Daoud's police posts in the Tajik Pansjer valley, led by the predominantly Tajik Jamaat Islami. The Jamaat Islami and another fundamentalist faction also recruited in 1974, Hezbe Islami, were later to become the principal beneficiaries of Pakistan-administered American aid to the Afghan resistance.

When the Communists took over in Kabul in 1978, Hezbe Islami and other fundamentalist exile groups saw a golden opportunity to build up their organizational cadres among the Afghan refugees in Pakistan with the help of the ISI and affluent fundamentalist groups in the Gulf region and throughout the Middle East. The resistance struggle, in their eyes, was merely a transitory stage in a long-term strategy designed to supplant the entire preexisting social and political hierarchy of the country. Thus, their enemies were not only Soviet troops and Afghan Communist infidels but also most of the nonfundamentalist resistance elements.

The depth of the cleavage in the resistance reflected a basic clash over the nature of the Afghan polity. In the fundamentalist concept of a centralized Islamic state, Afghanistan was merely one geographical portion of a larger Islamic nation. This pan-Islamic vision conflicted directly with the concept of Pushtun-centered Afghan nationalism that had been fostered for two centuries by the Pushtun monarchy. It was no accident that neither of the leading fundamentalist groups was rooted in the Pushtun tribal structure. Burhanuddin Rab-

bani's Jamaat Islami consisted almost entirely of Tajiks, while the hard-core activists of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezbe Islami were, like Hekmatyar himself, detribalized Pushtuns from migrant families in northern Afghanistan who had long been cut off from the tribal structure and were not part of the pro-"Pushtunistan" movement.

Against the background of the "Pushtunistan" dispute, Islamabad made a conscious effort beginning in 1978 to keep the resistance divided and to favor fundamentalist groups in the allocation of aid. Rabbani, Hekmatyar, and another fundamentalist leader, Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, received the largest share of aid at the expense of four groups headed by traditionalist Muslim divines with tribal alliances.[25]

Given the massive amount of foreign aid dispensed under its auspices, the ISI had little difficulty in maintaining its control over the resistance except for one significant episode immediately following the Soviet invasion in early 1980. Pushtun tribal leaders made an impressive effort to establish a unified, representative resistance movement that might have offered a credible non-Communist political and military challenge to the Kabul regime if it had not been successfully undermined by the ISI and its Afghan allies.

The prime mover in this effort was Mohammed Omar Babrakzai, a leader of the powerful Jadran tribe in Paktia District and a former judge of the Kabul High Court. It was literally within days of the invasion that Babrakzai convened a preparatory "National Council" on January 4 to map an Afghan response. Meeting intermittently for six weeks, the group decided to call a Loya Jirga, or traditional national assembly, that would in turn set up permanent machinery to direct resistance activities militarily and politically, possibly leading to a government-in-exile.

At first the fundamentalists and the ISI dismissed the effort as unimportant. When the Loya Jirga was convened outside of Peshawar on May 11, however, Pakistani and other foreign observers were startled by its efficient organization and its unmistakably representative character. Edward Girardet of the *Christian Science Monitor* called it "the first significant step by the divided Afghan guerrilla forces toward closing ranks to oust Soviet forces from their country."[26] The 916 delegates came from all provinces, all major Pushtun tribes, and all non-Pushtun ethnic groups. Precisely because it was broadly representative, however, it constituted a threat to the Pakistan-based exile groups.

The National Commission set up by the Loya Jirga was deliberately structured to give potent representation to the exile groups but to preclude their control. Out of one hundred members, the Pakistan-based parties received seven seats each, totaling forty-nine. The rest of the seats were filled by members chosen on a provincial basis. The power to choose resistance commanders was specifically assigned to local tribal leaders, a pointed slap in the face to ISI and the seven parties. Sharply rejecting fundamentalist doctrine, the Loya Jirga called for a nonsectarian Islam that "would not be repugnant to any Shariat (school)" in the country. Rejecting the concept of a centralized Islamic state, it envisaged a loose federal structure for postwar Afghanistan in which tribal and regional autonomy would be respected. In foreign affairs, it urged a policy of nonalign-

ment and coexistence, in marked contrast to vitriolic fundamentalist propaganda in which the Soviet Union and Islamic countries were depicted as irreconcilable enemies.[27]

The success of the Loya Jirga triggered a skillful ISI covert campaign designed to sow dissension among the constituent factions of the newly created National Commission. Numerous accounts of this campaign were reported to me during a Peshawar visit in late June. As Girardet reported, the fundamentalist parties were "doing everything possible to subvert the proceedings" and eventually resigned from the Commission.[28] Soon thereafter the nonfundamentalist groups also walked out after ISI threats to cut off the limited weapons aid and economic subventions on which they subsisted. By late 1980 the National Commission was virtually defunct and the divisions in the resistance had once again hardened.

The process of polarization that ensued did not prevent local resistance commanders from waging effective guerrilla warfare against Soviet and Afghan forces in many areas during the years thereafter. But it repeatedly paralyzed efforts to develop a coordinated military strategy. Equally important, with its deep divisions, the resistance was never able to offer a compelling political alternative to Kabul, even though the Communist regime was narrowly based and stigmatized, in the eyes of most Afghans, by its Soviet sponsorship.

An Opening for the United Nations

By the fall of 1980, both superpowers recognized that the Afghan war was becoming a murky stalemate, politically as well as militarily. Pressures were building in the United States for an expansion of aid to the resistance, to be facilitated by a bigger and better military aid package for Pakistan. The Soviet Union was beginning to question its assumption that Afghans outraged with Amin's doctrinaire policies would welcome the Babrak Karmal regime with open arms. Publicly, Moscow sent cautious diplomatic signals indicating a readiness to contemplate a negotiated withdrawal. Privately, it is now known, voices were raised inside the Soviet leadership expressing doubt that the Afghan struggle could be resolved militarily.

In Washington, the rationale for the Afghan policies that were to be adopted by the Reagan Administration was first spelled out in the last months of the Carter Administration in the report of a study mission to Pakistan by the Pentagon-supported Rand Corporation. The report explicitly linked upgraded aid to the resistance with massive military aid to Islamabad. Its full significance became apparent five months later when its author, Francis Fukuyama, was appointed to the State Department's Policy Planning Council, where he was assigned to develop a new policy for Southwest Asia.

While small arms were flowing into Afghanistan through Pakistan, the Rand report said, Islamabad "can and does prevent the entry of larger and more sophisticated weapons." Underlining the need for "large numbers of sophisticated weapons, such as surface-to-air missiles, antitank guided missiles, and land

mines," Fukuyama warned that the Soviet Union might engage in cross-border retaliation unless the United States provided Islamabad with "a substantial amount of military aid" as a deterrent. He mentioned specifically F-16 fighter aircraft and tanks in addition to equipment for a new Army corps.[29]

The first Soviet signals of a serious interest in negotiations came after the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution on November 20 condemning the invasion and calling for the appointment of a Special Representative to seek a peaceful solution. Until then, Moscow had not deviated from its support for Kabul's demand for separate, direct negotiations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Afghanistan and Iran. Islamabad had rejected these demands, arguing that bilateral talks would constitute Pakistani recognition of the legitimacy of the Communist regime, thus placing Pakistan in violation of resolutions adopted by the prestigious Islamic Conference, a representative forum embracing Islamic states of varying political hues. In early December, however, the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad told Agha Shahi that Moscow was ready to accept a U.N. role. Shahi then took the lead in pushing for U.N. involvement and in so doing found himself on a collision course with the United States.

On January 4 Shahi wrote to Secretary General Kurt Waldheim urging him to promote a dialogue between Pakistan, Iran, and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. By providing for Kabul's representation on a party rather than on a governmental basis, Shahi was attempting to avoid conflict with Islamic Conference resolutions. But his formula was strongly opposed by conservative Islamic governments and by Washington because it pointedly omitted representation for the Afghan resistance groups. The Islamic Conference had specifically called for the inclusion of "Afghan nationalist leaders" in any negotiations on a settlement.

In a confidential State Department cable several days later, Assistant Secretary of State Saunders warned Secretary Vance that "if no representatives of the Afghan nationalists take part, the stature of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan will, de facto, be enhanced." Shahi had made a "deal" with the Russians that was "at odds with the General Assembly resolution, which does not limit the role of the Secretary General to promoting a regional dialogue." By accepting a regional format in which Kabul could seek to link a termination of aid with Soviet troop withdrawals, Shahi was playing Kabul's game, "and association of the United Nations with these talks would be an added advantage for the Soviet-Afghan side."[30]

As the *Economist* reported, Shahi succeeded in "toning down" a resolution condemning the Russians at an Islamic Conference meeting at Taif, Saudi Arabia, in late January and was beginning to talk about a coalition government in Kabul that could include some members of the People's Democratic Party, together with a Soviet-American deal in which the United States would agree to give up the idea of its Rapid Deployment Force in the Gulf in exchange for a Soviet withdrawal.[31] Returning from Taif, Shahi complained to me in a conversation at the United Nations that State Department officials were "giving me a hard time, telling me they don't like what I am doing."[32] Richard Burt, who

became Director of the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs in the State Department when the Reagan Administration took office, told me in March that "I don't know how the Carter people felt, but we don't trust Shahi at all." Referring to General Akhtar Abdul Rahman, then head of the ISI, Burt said that "we route everything to Zia through Akhtar."[33]

With its hard-line approach to the Soviet Union, the Reagan Administration felt that Carter had not moved aggressively enough to exploit Soviet discomfiture in Afghanistan. The early months of 1981 were marked by a reappraisal of the covert aid program and of American policy toward Pakistan. Meanwhile, during these same months, serious doubts concerning the war were beginning to surface for the first time within the Soviet leadership.

Some of the leading Soviet generals involved in the initial operations in Afghanistan had returned from trips there gloomily depicting a tunnel with no light at the end. These included General Valentin Varennikov, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, and Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, all of whom had cautioned against intervention in 1979. Varennikov told me that Defense Minister Ustinov, who had been unwilling to question Brezhnev when the 1979 decision was made, "began to listen to us" during the first year of the conflict. General Tep-Grigoriants has recalled that in one of his monthly briefings with Ustinov in early 1981, the Defense Minister "turned to me and said, 'Look, let's suppose that I am not a minister, that I do not have any epaulets. We are both Communists, so come on, in all honesty, when will we end the war there?' I told him what I thought without holding anything back, that it was impossible to resolve the Afghan problem by military means. There is only one way, the political way, to form a coalition government."[34]

Ustinov felt so strongly that he sent a letter to his fellow members of the Politburo in February in which he declared that "no military solution to the war was possible and that it was necessary to find a political and diplomatic way out." Yuri Gankovsky of the Institute of Oriental Studies said that he had seen the letter. A friend in the Central Committee staff told Gankovsky that no member of the Politburo was prepared to join with Ustinov in getting it on the agenda for formal consideration, and the letter was sent to the Archives. Similarly, an appeal for a reexamination of Afghan policy by a group of prominent scholars was pigeonholed in the Central Committee.[35]

Pakistan Becomes a Frontline State

The Reagan Administration consciously paved the way for its escalation in Afghanistan with a decision to give Pakistan a military aid program much bigger than the $400 million package that Brzezinski had offered. State Department documents show explicitly that American policy makers viewed expanded military aid as the key to getting Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan. The Administration also hoped that military aid leverage would enable the United States to dissuade Islamabad from developing its nuclear option.[36] President Zia, however, proved to be a hard bargainer, publicly serving notice that he

would not cooperate in Afghanistan if the United States attached strings to its aid. Pakistan was the "necessary conduit" for stepped-up aid to the Afghan resistance, he told columnist Joseph Kraft, but Islamabad would play this role only if the United States demonstrated its "credibility and reliability" as an ally by fulfilling three conditions. The most important of these, Kraft reported, was "giving up its opposition to Pakistani plans to develop nuclear energy for 'peaceful purposes.'"[37]

The tensions between Shahi and the ruling generals gradually sharpened during 1981 as the bargaining over the aid package proceeded. Shahi was "basically uncomfortable with getting too close to the U.S. and with tweaking the Soviets," said Ambassador Hummell. Moreover, Hummell added, as a Shia, Shahi objected to Zia's tilt toward Sunni Saudi Arabia at the expense of Pakistani ties with Shia Iran. Nevertheless, he did his duty as Foreign Minister by pushing for the big military aid package desired by Zia when he visited Washington in late April. At the same time, he emphasized that Pakistan would remain nonaligned. He irritated American officials by reaffirming that he did not want to see a superpower presence in the Gulf, did not support the U.S. "strategic consensus" policy then unfolding, and would continue to encourage U.N. efforts to mediate in Afghanistan.

According to Shahi, his meetings with Secretary of State Alexander Haig on April 20 and 21 were "very strained" because Haig expressed

> his concern and dissatisfaction with the idea of a U.N. role in Afghanistan. He felt that talks involving Kabul would inevitably give respectability to the Karmal regime. He asked me to give up this idea, which I explained I could not do. I told him I felt it would be against our interests if Afghanistan were to become central to the American-Soviet conflict because then no settlement would be possible, and sooner or later, the Russians might retaliate against us. Also, he didn't like it when I told him that Pakistan would insist on controlling the level and allocation of the arms going in, that we couldn't afford to lose control over them.[38]

Haig said that he does not remember discussing the U.N. negotiations, which "didn't loom as large in my mind as in his." What interested the United States at that time, he explained, was "forging a broad *mujahideen* coalition. My discussions with the Foreign Minister would have been directed along those lines, notwithstanding the fact that the Pakistan government had its special favorites among the Afghan factions." Was the United States worried that support for Islamic fundamentalist groups could cause problems later on? "We wanted to get all of the factions involved, we didn't like their narrow approach," he replied. "Casey wanted what you might call an ecumenical resistance. The Paks wanted their own people. There were some tensions over this, but it wasn't a big deal for us."[39]

Given its distrust of Shahi, the United States carried on the climactic phase of its military aid negotiations with Pakistan in May through its back-channel military and CIA contacts with Zia. In mid-June, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane and Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance James Buckley visited Islamabad and reached final agreement on a five-year $1.5 bil-

lion military package, including forty F-16s, together with another $1.7 billion in economic aid. Announcing the agreement, Shahi told a press conference that it would not alter Pakistan's effort to "transform the Gulf region into a non-aligned zone free of the military presence of any superpower."[40] After meetings with Zia and his entourage, however, at some of which Shahi was not present, American officials were no longer worried about what the Foreign Minister said. Pleased with the size of the program and its inclusion of F-16s, Zia and the generals talked effusively about the covert program in Afghanistan and other cooperation as a "frontline state."

"Their attitude was that Agha Shahi was doing his own thing, that we needn't be concerned about it," commented the CIA's Station Chief, John Reagan. "We all knew," said Reagan, that "what Shahi was doing diplomatically in relation to Afghanistan did not affect what was being done on the ground."

"I became convinced during this visit that Zia was using me as a front man for diplomatic window dressing and for bargaining purposes," Shahi said. "At the same time, he was working behind my back to subvert the policies on which he professed agreement, and of course for some time it had been obvious that the Americans wanted to cut me out." For the remainder of the year, Shahi vacillated, hoping that the situation would improve, but "I had less and less control over policy, which was increasingly guided by the desire to please Saudi Arabia and the United States. We should have shaken hands with the Americans, but not embraced them."[41] Finally, in February 1982, he resigned.[42]

Disregarding American objections, Shahi continued until his departure to press U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to take advantage of the new Soviet readiness for a U.N. role in Afghanistan. Waldheim eventually sent Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, then Undersecretary General for Special Political Affairs, on two missions to Kabul, Islamabad, and Teheran in late 1981 that accomplished little but helped to set the stage for the Geneva negotiations beginning in 1982. "The Russians want to do something," he told me after returning from one of these missions, "but Kabul is nervous. What we have is a bridge of straw, and we shouldn't try to run across it too much."[43]

Upgrading Afghan Aid

The bargaining between Washington and Islamabad over military aid during 1981 was accompanied by internecine jostling for position within the newly installed Reagan Administration over the wisdom of escalation in Afghanistan. Some of the President's advisers were not as interested in the Afghan war as his new CIA Director, William J. Casey. Deputy National Security Adviser James Lilley volunteered in a mid-May conversation that the National Security Council had to look at Afghanistan in a global context. "Ask yourself," said Lilley, "whether we would want to escalate this while Poland is on the front burner. Would escalation reduce the chances of the Soviets going into Poland, or is it more valuable to retain the threat of escalation, showing restraint on our part as a means of inducing restraint on their part?"[44] Geoffrey Kemp, who was then

Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs in the NSC, emphasized that the Afghan war was "a war of attrition" in which sophisticated weapons were not necessary to achieve American objectives.[45]

When Reagan took over, the CIA weapons aid program was a significant but circumscribed effort. Direct U.S. weapons shipments had started in mid-January 1980.[46] However, Pakistan had imposed logistical constraints on the scope and speed of the aid influx by ruling out the use of storage depots within its territory. Islamabad insisted that incoming aid shipments be transshipped directly into Afghanistan to minimize the possibility of Soviet detection and possible retaliation. As a result of this restriction and of the difficulties involved in organizing a transshipment network over rough, mountainous terrain, there were generally no more than two planeloads of aid cargo per week going into Pakistan during most of 1980.[47] Congressional appropriations for the year totaled only $30 million, although Saudi and other contributions brought overall funding for the program to some $75 million.

Brzezinski, pushing for expansion of the program, had faced foot-dragging not only in Islamabad but also on the part of Carter's CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, and his Deputy Director for Operations, CIA career officer John McMahon. According to Bob Woodward in his book on Casey, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA,* Turner "had wondered long and hard whether it was permissible to use other people's lives for the geopolitical interests of the United States. . . . He had worried that U.S. policy was to fight to the last Afghan, but he had supported the operation in the end."[48] Another Casey biographer, Joseph Persico, relates that McMahon had emphasized congressional doubts about the program in his first briefing with Casey. McMahon explained to the new director that

> some lawmakers on the Hill were asking tough questions about the Afghan operation. Who were the arms going to besides the *mujahideen?* To drug dealers? Terrorists? To crazies in Libya and Iran? What about the risk of provoking the Russians if we pushed too hard? This time U.S.-supplied weapons were killing Russian soldiers. And some liberals in Congress questioned the morality of expending the lives of Afghan peasants and herdsmen to make points for U.S. foreign policy. Were we going to fight to the last *mujahideen?*

Dismissing such questions impatiently, one of those present said, Casey exclaimed that

> 'when we supported organized resistance against Hitler, it saved lives in long run. It's the same thing in Afghanistan.' . . . Obviously, the program had to be expanded. The Saudis were already kicking in, but they were flush and could contribute more. The Egyptians manufactured weapons going to the *mujahideen,* but the quality was poor; they had to be pressured into doing a better job. And the Pakistanis had to be persuaded to open more delivery routes into Afghanistan.[49]

The role played by the Egyptians was of special interest because, surprisingly, the weapons they were manufacturing were Soviet-model weapons. In order to avoid provoking Soviet retaliation, Turner and McMahon felt, the

United States should be able to deny credibly that it was helping the *mujahideen.* Thus, American weapons were ruled out under a policy designed to ensure "plausible deniability." Where did the Afghan resistance get its weapons? The answer was to be that it was using weapons captured from Soviet forces. In reality, while some Soviet weapons were indeed being captured, more were being supplied through the CIA-orchestrated program. Some Soviet weapons were bought in the arms black market; Frank Anderson, one of those involved in the CIA program, commented to me that "there were more automatic weapons in the bazaars of Beirut than there were telephones."[50] Some were procured from countries that had been recipients of Soviet aid, principally Egypt. But the largest portion of the Soviet-model weapons flowing to the resistance were replicated in ordnance factories located in Egypt, often utilizing components supplied by western European companies with CIA links.

It was Turner who first told me in 1981[51] about the Egyptian role in the program. In 1975 Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Egypt had set up the Arab Organization for Industrialization to encourage indigenous Arab arms production. The four countries had invested $1.04 billion in constructing a network of arms plants in Egypt during the following three years. The Saqr factory near Cairo had started to make an Egyptian version of the Soviet Sam-7 surface-to-air missile as well as surface-to-surface missiles, antitank grenades, and less sophisticated items such as the AK-47 Kalashnikov rifle.[52] Then, in July 1979, angered by Egypt's rapprochement with Israel, Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., and Qatar backed out of the project. The plants were idle in 1980 when the CIA gave Cairo the funds and the technical support necessary to make a variety of Soviet-model weaponry needed for the Afghan aid program.

General Edward C. Meyer, who was army Chief of Staff from 1979 until mid-1983, said that certain Soviet-model equipment could not be satisfactorily replicated in the Egyptian factories. In these cases, the Defense Department cooperated with the CIA in arranging to have the items in question made or upgraded in American factories, among them rocket launchers, heavy machine guns, antiaircraft guns, and grenades.

When Casey "first came over to talk with me," General Meyer recalled, "what he wanted to talk about was Afghanistan." He was not satisfied with how the program was working and felt inhibited by the policy of plausible deniability. Casey wanted better versions of Soviet equipment. In addition he wanted to acquire more effective equipment from more diverse sources in order to provide effective air defense against the Soviet MI-24 helicopters.[53] China had been supplying Sam-7s since June, 1980,[54] but neither these nor the ones being made in Egypt had proved very effective. At Casey's insistence, the Hughes Aircraft Company was assigned to develop improved warheads and put them on the Egyptian-made missiles. Casey also told Meyer that he wanted to augment the Sam-7s with French, British, and, eventually, American surface-to-air missiles.

An abortive experiment in the use of American Redeye missiles had been made in late 1980. "Several dozen" Redeyes were shipped to Pakistan in a super-

secret program, Ambassador Hummell said, but their failure rate was high. Pakistani officials were "very nervous" about them, Hummell added, fearing that their widespread use would invite Soviet retaliation. Islamabad was "very relieved" when they proved ineffective and the CIA agreed not to send any more. But Casey's arrival led to renewed CIA interest in the Redeye, Meyer said, culminating in a formal request to the Pentagon in late 1981 for a large consignment and an accompanying training program. After an interagency study, the request was rebuffed.

Casey launched his campaign to get expanded Saudi support for the Afghan program during a visit to Riyadh in April 1981 as part of his first tour of CIA stations in the Middle East. King Fahd was noncommittal until the Reagan Administration agreed to sell the Saudis five Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWAC) planes in a controversial $8.5 billion deal that was delayed four months by a bitter congressional debate. Casey helped to push through the AWAC sale in return for Saudi agreement to give large-scale support to anti-Communist covert action programs, especially in Afghanistan and Nicaragua.[55]

The new CIA Director was still feeling his way during 1981. He was engaged throughout the year in bureaucratic battles with entrenched professionals in the CIA hierarchy, culminating in the resignation of his choice for Deputy Director, Max Hugel, an old business crony, who became embroiled in a scandal over shady financial dealings. Casey did not put his stamp on Afghan policy during his first year in office. But he did succeed in upgrading appropriations for the Afghan aid program to $80 million for the 1981–1982 fiscal year, and he was to play an increasingly active role in Administration policy debates on Afghanistan as he consolidated his power during the years thereafter.

The New Soviet Offensive Strategy

Inside Afghanistan the tempo of the war gradually increased during 1981 and early 1982. Reacting to the heavy casualties suffered during the first months of fighting, the Red Army shifted from massive armored sweeps to smaller operations, coupled with more regular and more intense air bombardment.

This shift was typified in August 1981 when Soviet forces waged a series of combined ground and air operations with Afghan forces against resistance fighters led by Zabiullah, a celebrated commander in the northeast who controlled a pocket of territory in the Marmoul gorge area of Balkh Province. As in many other operations in which they claimed victory, the Soviet forces, while dislodging resistance fighters from their strongholds, failed to destroy them. After a vain attempt to flush out Zabiullah's men from a narrow defile in which they were hiding, the Soviet and Afghan forces abandoned the offensive and were airlifted out.[56]

Like the Marmoul offensive, Soviet-Afghan operations in Logar, Paghman, and Kandahar were also inconclusive. Two other 1981 campaigns that proved to have special importance in shaping the subsequent course of battle were the Pansjer offensives in April and October. The Pansjer valley is a strategically

important region astride the route from the Soviet border to Kabul, and the leader of the resistance forces there, Ahmad Shah Massoud, had established a strong political machine in the valley long before the war. Massoud's men had been harassing Soviet forces since their arrival, triggering several retaliatory offensives in late 1980. Finally, in late March 1981, after Massoud staged a daring raid on the Bagram airport near Kabul, Soviet and Afghan forces made the first of what were to be a series of determined efforts to destroy his bases. After three weeks of fighting, Massoud's men had been driven from the valley but were safely ensconced in the hills and continued to stage ambushes against the mechanized Soviet forces encamped below.

In a similar offensive in November marked by two weeks of fighting, Soviet forces established a base at the head of the valley that gave them control of the Anjuman pass, which commanded access in and out of the valley. But the end result was an impasse, with Massoud's fighters continually harassing the Soviet forces.

In late 1981 a fresh team of Soviet generals arrived in Kabul and launched a new strategy designed to seal off the infiltration of resistance fighters and equipment caravans from Pakistan. Jets and helicopters staged frequent incursions into Pakistani air space during October, November, and December, frequently flying back without opening fire. On occasion, they did turn their fire on refugee encampments and resistance base camps. Their objective was to frighten both the Afghans and the Pakistanis in the border areas, but the principal effect of these raids was to bolster the Pakistani case for F-16 aircraft in Washington.

Among the more successful Soviet operations in late 1981 was a series of offensives in Nangrahar Province near the Pakistan border and a winter offensive in Parwan, where Soviet and Afghan forces crushed much of the resistance activity in the province. Recounting these successes, Mark Urban, a perceptive British historian of the war, observed that they gave the Soviet army a "new operational confidence." It was this upbeat mood, Urban said, that led to more aggressive tactics during 1982, symbolized, in particular, by the climactic Pansjer offensives of May and August—the biggest battles of the entire war.[57]

Once again, as in 1981, it was a bold raid by Massoud's fighters on the Bagram air base that provoked a Soviet response. Sneaking through Soviet airport defenses on the night of April 25, they destroyed and damaged more than a dozen Soviet planes. Two weeks later some eleven thousand Soviet soldiers and another four thousand Afghan Army troops pushed up the valley from the south, while more Soviet troops came down from the north in a pincer action. Once the ground troops had sealed off the valley, Soviet Su-25s and other fighter bombers began merciless carpet-bombing raids, pummeling many Afghan villages into oblivion. This was followed by air assault troops who were flown in by helicopters. The heliborne troops did not know the terrain, failed to dig in, and were exposed to continual ambushes by Massoud's fighters, who escaped largely unscathed into the hills.

"Ahmed Shah's forces put up a fierce struggle," said Lieutenant General Tep-Grigoriants, who commanded the operation, "fighting with a level of fanaticism never previously encountered by our forces."[58]

Soviet statistics published after the war indicated that out of 13,310 Soviet soldiers and airmen killed throughout the war, 4,730 died in 1980, 1981, and 1982, including 540 who died from "handling weapons carelessly and from wounds and diseases." In 1982, the peak year, 1,948 died, 1,623 in combat. This was exceeded only once during the rest of the war, in 1984, when 2,343 died, 2,060 in combat.[59]

Resistance groups rarely acknowledged significant casualties in battle, emphasizing instead casualties among civilian noncombatants resulting from Soviet scorched earth and depopulation policies. Estimates of such casualties have ranged from 175,000 to more than a million during the course of the war. A secret State Department assessment of the resistance movement in 1981 made no attempt to estimate casualties. The report said that resistance military successes, "far overshadowing setbacks," had put the Kabul regime "increasingly on the defensive, demonstrating a growing capability to interfere with the Soviet supply system." But it emphasized that the resistance had achieved its successes despite its "deep divisions" and "the prevailing anarchy within the movement."

In particular, the report pointed to the irony that "the tribal and regional groups which bear the brunt of the fighting have become progressively more disillusioned with the Pakistan-based Peshawar organizations while, at the same time, simultaneously becoming more dependent on them." This "unwelcome symbiotic relationship," it noted, "has grown out of the increasing importance of outside assistance to the resistance movement." The importance of outside help "should not be overestimated," the report added, since all it did was "to give the freedom fighters a better defensive capability to protect their strongholds and a capability to attack supply convoys."

Whether the resistance could "develop into a more significant threat to the Soviets," concluded the report, "depends largely on whether they can successfully join forces to become a united movement. . . . This is not to suggest that a united resistance could physically force the Soviets out of Afghanistan. But it could make their position considerably more difficult to maintain, raising the question of relative costs versus gains."[60]

3

MY MISSION BEGINS

Diego Cordovez

- *The U.N. condemns the Soviet invasion*
- *Faint negotiating hints: The May (1981) proposals of Kabul*
- *The Islamabad incident*
- *Pérez de Cuéllar travels to Islamabad and Kabul*
- *Waldheim talks to Brezhnev and Gromyko*
- *The plan of the European Community*
- *The August 1981 proposals of Kabul*
- *A talk with Waldheim and his story about Khrushchev*
- *Pérez de Cuéllar becomes Secretary-General and I become the mediator*
- *My first trip to Islamabad, Kabul, and Teheran (April 1982)*
- *A promising meeting with the Sahabzada Yaqub Khan*
- *My first encounter with President Zia of Pakistan*
- *The talks in Kabul with Karmal and Dost*
- *The agreement to have proximity talks in Geneva*
- *Talks with Yaqub and Dost in Havana*
- *First meetings with Soviets and Americans*
- *Geneva One (June 1982): The negotiations begin*

I

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan sent shock waves through the chambers and corridors of the United Nations. At the time the United States and most other Western countries were increasingly critical of an "automatic majority" of socialist and Third World countries that in their view prevented the adoption of

balanced decisions on matters of international concern. The West had been outraged by a resolution declaring Zionism a form of racism and racial discrimination. It was, therefore, as if the invasion offered a long-sought opportunity to bring about a split among the socialist and developing countries.

The West thus started an active campaign to galvanize support for a strong condemnation of the Soviet Union. "It is hard to adjust your thinking overnight from American imperialism to Soviet imperialism," said an Asian delegate when the Security Council was convened on January 5, 1980. Oleg Troyanovsky, the usually gregarious Soviet Ambassador, looked gloomy as Shah Mohammed Dost, the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, recited a boring and often repeated account of developments in his country. He stressed that the "limited contingents" of Soviet armed forces had been requested to remove foreign threats, in conformity with a treaty of friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation. Troyanovsky accused the United States and other Western countries, as well as China, of intervening in Afghanistan's internal affairs since April 1978. The Soviet Union, he said, would withdraw its troops just as soon as they were no longer needed. Donald McHenry, the urbane and skillful American Ambassador, had little to add to President Carter's televised speech, delivered on the eve of the Council meeting, in which the U.S. decision to impose sanctions against the Soviet Union and to lift the arms embargo to Pakistan was announced.

The Soviet Union predictably vetoed a resolution condemning the invasion submitted by a group of developing countries.[1] An emergency special session of the General Assembly was then convened on January 14. With only a few exceptions, the more than seventy delegations that spoke condemned the invasion as a blatant violation of the U.N. Charter and of international law. A resolution "strongly deploring" the invasion and calling for the immediate, unconditional, and total withdrawal of the "foreign troops"—a euphemism that was to be relentlessly ridiculed by the press—was adopted on January 14, 1980, by a vote of 104 to 18, with 18 abstentions.[2]

During the debate in the Assembly there had been reports of differences between the European countries and the United States concerning their respective reactions to the invasion—relations between President Carter and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt were said to be very tense—but subsequently the European Community also adopted its own very strong statement of condemnation. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, meeting in Islamabad, requested its members to sever diplomatic relations with Kabul, and many other organizations issued statements of reproof.

Five months after the invasion, Kabul sent a first and somewhat timid signal of its willingness to negotiate. On May 15 it published a set of proposals suggesting negotiations with Iran and Pakistan aimed at a political solution that would include the cessation of "foreign interference" in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Kabul also suggested turning the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf into a zone of peace.[3] It was widely felt at the U.N. that the proposals should be ignored or rejected as insincere; they were seen essentially as a device to present a more dignified position at the autumn session of the Assem-

bly. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim wrote in his annual report that he had consulted the governments concerned but had not found a basis for negotiations.[4]

When the General Assembly held its debate on Afghanistan in November, a very large majority in opposition to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan had evidently been consolidated. Pakistan began a series of lobbying operations designed to gather the largest possible number of votes. Ambassador Shanawaz, the permanent representative in New York, who was related to the former King of Afghanistan—his Manhattan townhouse was full of photographs of the Afghan royal family—was the floor leader. The whole operation was done so skillfully that over the years it acquired the characteristics of a carefully staged theatrical production. Working to ensure that all friendly delegations were seated and ready at the time of voting, a young Pakistani diplomat once came out of the Assembly hall inquiring anxiously if any of his colleagues had seen the Honduran Ambassador. He was directed to the men's room. A few minutes later he emerged, holding the Ambassador by the arm and rushing back to the Assembly hall. The resolution was adopted by 111 votes to 22, with 12 abstentions.[5]

One new element in the resolution, which was otherwise identical to the one adopted earlier in the year, was an expression of "hope" that the Secretary General would appoint a special representative, the title normally given to U.N. mediators. In the negotiations that preceded the adoption of the resolution, the Soviets had been wary that such an appointment might "internationalize" the conflict; they preferred direct negotiations with Pakistan and Iran, which they expected would legitimize the Kabul regime.

The word *hope* was to give Waldheim an enormous headache. It is indeed predictable at the U.N. that when governments cannot resolve a problem they "pass the buck" to the Secretary General. In this particular case it was predictable that the proponents of the appointment would claim that the Secretary General was obliged to designate a special representative without delay and that those who did not support the idea would say that the text merely expressed a wish and that no appointment was required. That is precisely what happened.

Waldheim first tried to sound out Foreign Minister Dost on ways and means to start a dialogue, which Kabul had advocated in its May proposals, but with some kind of U.N. involvement. He suggested a meeting at the U.N. of Afghan, Pakistani, and Iranian delegations with a view to starting negotiations, which could then be assisted by a representative of the Secretary General. Dost said, in essence, that the proposed meeting would be seen as the beginning of U.N. mediation, which he opposed. Agha Shahi, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, took the position that the proposed meeting should be convened by the U.N. special representative, whose appointment the Secretary General was obliged to announce forthwith. He also pointed out that Pakistan's participation in the meeting should not imply its recognition of the Kabul regime. "Recognition should come at the end of the process and not at the beginning," he said.

Unbeknownst to Waldheim, parallel discussions intended to start a process

of negotiations were taking place in Pakistan between President Mohammed Zia Ul-Haq and Soviet Ambassador Vitaly Smirnoff. The exchange, which had ended in what became known as the "Islamabad incident," was to have a long-lasting negative effect on relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Ironically, however, it also facilitated subsequent arrangements toward a negotiated settlement.

Apparently Zia, in several conversations with Smirnoff, during late December 1980 and early January 1981, proposed a trilateral meeting to be held under the auspices of a U.N. special representative. The Soviet Ambassador understood that the President had suggested a bilateral meeting "with the presence of a U.N. representative," not a special representative. When Smirnoff conveyed his Government's reply, which was positive, Zia said that his proposal was different. Waldheim told the Soviets that Zia had given him this version of the "incident" when they met in Taif, Saudi Arabia. The Soviets angrily told Waldheim that Pakistan had changed its position. Their reaction left no doubt that there would be no further attempts to establish a "back channel" with Pakistan.

When in February 1981 Waldheim met Agha Shahi and Dost in New Delhi during a conference of nonaligned ministers, he was once again confronted with two irreconcilable positions. Pakistan demanded the appointment of a special representative in order to hold trilateral negotiations; Kabul was willing to hold only bilateral negotiations with Pakistan and Iran. Waldheim had by then realized that the Soviets were playing with the idea of accepting a U.N. representative. Annoyed as he was by Afghan and Pakistani rigidity, Waldheim therefore decided then and there to return the ball thrown at him in the Assembly resolution in a typically clever fashion: He announced to the conference the appointment of Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the Undersecretary General for Special Political Affairs, as his "personal representative." Waldheim expected that the Soviets would appreciate that this was a more tentative step than the appointment of a "special representative." Moreover, Pérez de Cuéllar was well known to them because he had served as his country's first Ambassador in Moscow.

Having managed to settle that problem, neither Waldheim nor his personal representative knew how, when, or where to start negotiations. The positions of Pakistan and Kabul were quite different on the format, let alone the substance, of any possible discussions, and the Iranians had refused to answer all the questions that had been put to them. Moreover, the Pakistanis seemed to have had their fingers burnt in the "Islamabad incident" and were not as interested as before in starting a process. (Washington, in particular, had not been pleased.) In the circumstances Waldheim decided that the first step should be to send Pérez de Cuéllar to the region, even if the United States had vetoed a visit of the "special representative" to Kabul. In that sense, too, the ambiguity of the title that the Secretary General had chosen proved useful.

Pérez de Cuéllar accordingly visited Pakistan and Afghanistan from April 12–16, 1981. The fact that he was received in Kabul was encouraging because the U.N. thus became formally involved. Zia and Agha Shahi felt that Kabul's flexibility was the result of increasing Soviet pressure and consequently adopted

an even more rigid position on the need for trilateral talks. Pérez de Cuéllar nonetheless felt that the U.N. role in the solution of the Afghan conflict seemed to have been consolidated.

Waldheim was not convinced until he discussed the matter with Brezhnev and Gromyko in May. Brezhnev noted that Pakistan had indicated at one time (yet another reference to the "Islamabad incident") that it was ready to hold bilateral talks with Afghanistan "but under pressure from the U.S. and China had changed its position." The Soviet Union, he said, was in favor of a political solution "of the international aspects" of the conflict and wished Afghanistan to remain a nonaligned country. Brezhnev and Gromyko were concerned that the United States and Pakistan were planning to conclude an agreement for the establishment of military bases in Pakistan.

Waldheim left Moscow convinced that the Soviets would support a larger role for the U.N. He was therefore quite upset when rumors started to circulate that the European Community was about to make a proposal that would take the question from the U.N. to a special conference of governments "because U.N. efforts seem to be getting nowhere." The proposal, an advance copy of which was given to Waldheim before it was published on June 30,[6] had been drafted by Lord Carrington, the able British Foreign Secretary and Chairman of the Community's Council of Ministers. When Lord Carrington visited Moscow in July, Gromyko told him that the proposal was "unrealistic" and the official Soviet statement referred to it as "unacceptable."

Lord Carrington subsequently told Waldheim that he had not been surprised that the Soviets had turned down the proposal but that the fact that he had been received in Moscow as representative of the Community, specifically to discuss the Afghan conflict, was indicative of the Soviets' willingness to explore the possibilities of a political solution. Moscow's reaction to the E.C. proposal reassured Waldheim that the Soviet Union would be forced increasingly to rely on the U.N. He instructed Pérez de Cuéllar, who had resigned as Undersecretary General in May but had been asked by Waldheim to continue as his personal representative on Afghanistan, to prepare for a second trip to the region.

Pérez de Cuéllar visited Islamabad and Kabul from August 4–9 but found that the attitudes concerning the format of the talks remained unchanged. He then told the two sides that the resolution of the Assembly and Kabul's May proposals, taken together, suggested that an agenda for the talks should contain four items: withdrawal of troops, interference, refugees and international guarantees of compliance. The fact that both sides told him that that was indeed the case led Pérez de Cuéllar to believe that the parties had accepted an agenda. But when he said so to Bernard Nossiter of the *New York Times,* there was an angry reaction from Agha Shahi.

The confusion arose out of a common misunderstanding among Westerners of customs in the East. As one speaks people listen politely and give the impression of acquiescence, nodding their heads, even while in fact some disagreement exists. Pakistan had in fact pointed out that a fifth question, self-determination of the Afghan people, would have to be included. It had also raised questions about the manner in which "interference" was mentioned in Kabul's May proposals.

Pakistan was not prepared to acknowledge that any interference was taking place and would not even consider unilateral commitments in that context.

Pérez de Cuéllar believed that it was important for the Secretary General to submit a substantive report to the Assembly. A mere procedural report, he told Waldheim, would undermine the credibility of the U.N. role and perhaps its very *raison d'être*. He therefore suggested that, before preparing the report, the Secretary General conduct a further round of consultations with the two sides in New York. It was at that point that I became involved in the Secretary General's efforts to solve the Afghan conflict.

II

My appointment as Undersecretary General for Special Political Affairs on August 1, 1981 was not devoid of controversy. I had been an international official for almost twenty years and was considered by many senior bureaucrats in the Secretariat to be too outspoken. I had indeed consistently stressed that there should be more forceful, imaginative, and creative input by the Secretariat in the consideration of international issues. I had said and written many controversial things, but no government, indeed nobody, had ever been able to accuse me of violating the principles and practices that U.N. officials are duty bound to observe.[7]

I also had very loyal friends who spoke to Waldheim about me. Although I was not transferred to his office staff, the Secretary General had increasingly often asked me to work directly with him on a number of assignments that would normally have been carried out by the occupants of other posts, including restructuring the economic and social sectors of the U.N. and mediating a dispute between Malta and Libya. In addition, at a sensitive time for Waldheim, who was avidly seeking reelection, he designated me to accompany a high-level commission that went to Teheran to seek the release of the American hostages. Waldheim also asked me to coordinate all good-offices efforts to end the Iran-Iraq war and to serve as the principal adviser to Olof Palme, the Swedish Prime Minister, when he was appointed mediator.

As soon as I moved to the thirty-eighth floor of the Secretariat building, where the Secretary General's office is located, I was briefed about the situation in Afghanistan. Although Pérez de Cuéllar had been asked to continue as Waldheim's personal representative, I was to organize all the relevant work of the Secretariat and maintain liaison with the governments concerned. My immediate task was to coordinate the round of discussions with Agha Shahi and Dost that Pérez de Cuéllar had suggested. (He had in the meantime been put forward as candidate for Secretary General, and questions were raised by the press as to why Waldheim's personal representative on Afghanistan was in Peru when the Assembly was about to hold what was certain to be a stormy annual debate on the subject. Rudy Stajduhar, Waldheim's able spokesman, seemed to speak with a heavier Yugoslav accent when asked a difficult question."Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar

has said," he mumbled, "that due to certain commitments he must remain in Lima.")

It was typical of Waldheim to feel that he was capable of settling in no time any problem that his subordinates had encountered. Faced with Agha Shahi's rigidity, he was therefore taken aback. Pakistan's stance was based upon its continuing conviction that the Soviet Union was pressing Kabul to start negotiations. A deputy foreign minister of the Soviet Union, Nicolai Firyubin, had reinforced this conviction during recent talks in Islamabad, and Afghanistan had published in August a new set of proposals that essentially repeated the May proposals but included a major concession: Kabul now accepted trilateral negotiations.[8] Dost told Waldheim that his Government had done all that was necessary to start the negotiations.

In a way that was true, because Pakistan had demanded trilateral negotiations and Afghanistan was now ready to hold them. The problem was that Iran was not ready, or, rather, it was not known if it was. (During one of my trips to Teheran with Olof Palme, Pérez de Cuéllar had telephoned to ask me to get some kind of response on this question from the Iranians. They promised to send one forthwith, but it never arrived.)

Waldheim tried to sort out the problem as ingeniously as he had solved the special representative predicament. He suggested that while the talks should be deemed to be trilateral, an "empty chair" should be reserved for Iran. Agha Shahi said that he could personally accept the suggestion but that he would have to obtain Zia's authorization. The reply was negative. Waldheim was told that at that very moment Pakistan was discussing with the United States a major military assistance program.

Turning to the agenda, Waldheim was again faced with a rather odd kind of disagreement: Both sides agreed that the four items that had been identified by Pérez de Cuéllar would have to be considered, but neither side was ready to accept that those items constituted the agenda for the talks. It therefore became impossible to draft the substantive report that Pérez de Cuéllar had wisely suggested. Waldheim was forced to say that the two sides had "stressed their respective priorities regarding the substantive issues to be negotiated."[9] He was utterly frustrated.

Pakistan skillfully obtained five more votes in favor of a resolution that was identical to the one adopted in 1980. The resolution was adopted by 116 votes to 23, with 12 abstentions.[10] On the whole, the list of those voting against the resolution was starting to look more and more like a checklist of the Soviet Union's closest allies.

After the resolution was adopted, and in a more relaxed atmosphere, I had a number of talks with high-level officials who were in New York attending the General Assembly. I wanted to have a clearer picture of the positions held not only by those who had been participating in the discussions with Pérez de Cuéllar and Waldheim but also by others directly concerned, including the Soviets and the Americans. I then sent a paper to Waldheim analyzing the situation that the U.N. was facing and suggesting two possible procedural ap-

proaches: (1) intensive shuttle diplomacy by the personal representative between Islamabad and Kabul (as well as Teheran if we received a positive reply) and/or (2) an invitation to the foreign ministers to begin negotiations by proxy in Vienna or Geneva. Waldheim sent the paper back with a note: "Diego, please discuss, W."

The Secretary General and I then had a long talk, late in the evening. He seemed very pessimistic, because he felt that at least for a while both sides would try to achieve military gains. "But one never knows," he said, "there might be an entirely different cast of characters," implying that the "characters" were perhaps the problem. In a more philosophical tone he then told me that Soviet troops might have never left his native Austria had it not been for Khrushchev. He seemed convinced of it, and as if to explain his assertion he told me something that had happened in his presence when Khrushchev visited Vienna in 1960. During a state banquet, pointing a finger at Vyacheslav Molotov, the disgraced former Foreign Minister, who had been appointed representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Khrushchev had said that "that man" had been strongly opposed to the withdrawal from Austria, a decision that he, Khrushchev, felt had been in the best interests of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev had added that, had he not overruled Molotov, the State Treaty would not have been signed.

Waldheim probably expected another Khrushchev to emerge some day and concluded that we should be patient. My suggestions might prove useful in order to "keep things alive." "But in January", he added, "we should review the whole situation and then decide how to proceed." By then I was certain that he would not be reelected, so I just nodded and left.

III

Shortly after Pérez de Cuéllar was elected Secretary General, he informed the Afghans, the Pakistanis, the Soviets, and the Americans that he intended to appoint me as his personal representative on Afghanistan. My appointment was announced on February 22, 1982, and I started preparations for my first trip "to the area," an expression used in U.N. reports to avoid specifying the exact locations visited. I had secured, in a conversation with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, Iran's agreement to include Teheran in my itinerary so that at least the personal representative's consultations should become trilateral. The Afghans and the Pakistanis were pleased.

But just as I was considering a date for my departure, I was informed that Agha Shahi, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, had resigned and been replaced by the Sahabzada Yaqub Khan. Born in India (Sahabzada is a title of Indian nobility), General Yaqub Khan had served, after a distinguished military career, as Ambassador in Washington, Paris (twice), and Moscow, where he was posted at the time of the invasion. He is a man of great character; his interests in philosophy and literature are wide, and he speaks several languages. Yaqub was sworn

in on March 21, and I decided to postpone my arrival in Islamabad for at least a few days to give some time for him to be briefed.

I eventually left New York at the beginning of April after another entirely unexpected international development—the Falkland/Malvinas war—had further detained me at U.N. Headquarters. The Secretary General was not in New York, and I had to receive Nicanor Costa Mendez, the Foreign Minister of Argentina, and attend the Security Council meetings until Pérez de Cuéllar's return. After a two-day stopover in Geneva, where I was briefed about the refugee situation by the UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross, I took off toward the East on a sleek red chartered jet, code signal U.N.-Two, with Captain Paul Freund in command. He was to become a good friend over many trips. My personal assistant, Cathy Szlamp, who had served in a similar capacity with British Prime Minister James Callaghan, had made all the arrangements with her usual efficiency and sense of humor. She helped me with unfailing loyalty and skill from the first to the last day of my mission.

There was time for reflection during the long trip. I was convinced that in order for the U.N. to show any potential to solve the Afghan conflict I would have to come back with an agreement on the format for the negotiations and on the agenda. I was also determined to demonstrate that the United Nations could be a suitable instrument for the solution of international disputes and that a U.N. official could act as an honest broker in negotiations. I felt that the task ahead would be particularly difficult because it would require the agreement of the superpowers, neither of which had been known to trust the U.N. and its Secretariat. I did not know then that the negotiations in which I was about to embark were to be the last concerning a regional conflict of the Cold War period.

I arrived in Islamabad at nearly midnight on Saturday, April 10, and the following morning had my first private meeting with Yaqub. This was to become our usual working procedure when I visited the region and before the beginning of a round of negotiations at Geneva. I was also to learn that any discussions I held in Islamabad before my meetings with Zia were essentially preliminary and exploratory. His authority was absolute, even vis-à-vis Yaqub, who had been his commanding officer.

Yaqub had obviously been thoroughly briefed about all the preceding consultations, but since both of us had been recently appointed I felt that it would be psychologically advantageous to pretend that we were starting from scratch. I therefore put forward my proposals for the initiation of a formal process of negotiations. I suggested holding "proximity talks"—a format in which the interlocutors never meet face to face—aimed at concluding a "comprehensive settlement" that would contain a set of interrelated provisions designed to resolve all the issues involved. I proposed that the talks be held in the sedate environment of Geneva.

I stressed that agreement on any aspect of the proposed "package deal" would not be considered final until all other parts of the package were likewise agreed upon. The withdrawal of Soviet troops would, of course, constitute a central issue of the negotiations. In connection with "interference," I proposed

that the settlement include a set of reciprocal obligations to enforce generally accepted principles of international law, which would enter into effect on an agreed date. Bearing in mind that there was a history of mutual accusations of interference, I said that it would be futile to engage in an endless exchange of recriminations concerning the past and indeed the present; what was important was to ensure that in future neither side would interfere in the internal affairs of the other. International guarantees would ensure compliance, and the arrangements concerning the refugees would conform to well-established principles and procedures of the United Nations.

I conceded that neither the Soviet Union nor Kabul would accept the inclusion of self-determination in the agenda but noted that the resolution of that issue would be the logical, as well as the practical, consequence of the settlement. If the Soviets wished seriously to resolve the Afghan crisis, I said, they, and the Afghans, would have to tackle that question sooner rather than later.

Yaqub addressed first the question of interference. It seemed that I had answered the major question about the way in which Pakistan could participate in the negotiations. The fact that the scheme that I had outlined did not involve "an admission of guilt on the part of Pakistan," as he put it, was obviously very satisfactory. He also agreed that it would not be possible to start the negotiations if Pakistan insisted on the inclusion of self-determination. As if reading from a brief, Yaqub added that there should be consultations with the refugees, a euphemism that Pakistan had adopted to refer to the *mujahideen* leaders.

We walked together to his conference room for the first "plenary" meeting. Miscellaneous aides took copious notes, starting what would gradually become enormous folders and dossiers that they carried back and forth to Geneva and New York, or wherever the Foreign Minister and I met. After my presentation Yaqub said, reading from a piece of paper that his advisers had hurriedly scribbled, that Pakistan would participate in proximity talks—which he preferred to call "indirect talks"—only if they were trilateral. This was a step backward, because the trilateral requirement had been mentioned only in connection with direct talks. I pointed out that the proximity format had been suggested to circumvent the issue. A number of questions were asked, but it was obvious that the "package deal" was very attractive as it eliminated any discussion about priorities.

I then met President Zia, who invited me to dinner. I did not find him charismatic, despite what many people had told me, but he did have an engaging personality. His character was a mixture of decisiveness—some would say imperiousness—and human warmth. The President would, for instance, often telephone to find out if I had everything I needed or if certain arrangements had been made in the way I wanted. He was also equivocal and deeply anti-Soviet, which explains some of the problems we faced during the negotiations.

Zia said first that "the key to the solution of the Afghan problem lay in Moscow" and protested that the Soviet Union was pressing Pakistan to have face-to-face negotiations with Kabul to secure its legitimacy. He was not in favor of "proximity talks," he said, and preferred shuttle diplomacy in the region, but as the conversation moved forward, and after I made some remarks about the

need for statesmanship, flexibility, and vision, he suddenly assured me that he would not be rigid "with regard to the representation of Iran at possible indirect talks at Geneva." It was yet another indication that the idea of a package deal had overriding appeal.

At a subsequent plenary meeting I produced a draft of a letter that I intended to send from New York to my interlocutors, setting out all the agreements reached during my consultations in their capitals. The letter was to become the "annotated agenda" for the negotiations, and I wanted the text to be drafted in close consultation with my interlocutors. It was as if I had asked the foreign ministry people to take their checkbooks out of their pockets, but by the time I left for Kabul I had a fairly good set of understandings written into the draft.

In Kabul I met Shah Mohammed Dost for the first time. An Indian friend had told me that he was a functionary with leftist ideas who had been chosen as foreign minister because of a family connection with Babrak Karmal. In the difficult circumstances in which he had to operate I felt that he consistently showed intelligence and professional skill. We readily established a relationship of mutual trust.

Dost bluntly pointed out at our first meeting that it was up to Pakistan to resolve the conflict. After a long explanation of the manner in which Pakistan and the United States, as well as "others," had developed increasingly intense interference operations, he assured me that Afghanistan wanted to conclude a political settlement. Dost also accepted holding proximity talks provided that, at a later stage, direct negotiations would take place. In fact, once I showed him the draft of my letter, he readily agreed with most of my proposals and seemed as happy as the Pakistanis with the notion of a package deal.

My meetings with Dost were evolving in such a satisfactory manner that my meeting with Karmal, which was long and mostly boring, proved largely unnecessary. A clever but not a pleasant man, Karmal felt that he should give me a beginner's course about Afghan society. When Dost and I resumed our discussions he did not insist on a unilateral commitment of noninterference by Pakistan and accepted my proposal of reciprocal obligations because, he said, he did not care what "legal formula" was used as long as interference was stopped. The long-term agreement on good-neighborly relations that I had suggested, he added, might bring about an end to the history of animosity between his country and Pakistan.

A second visit to Islamabad and Kabul was needed to finalize the draft of my letter—this always happens when mid-level officials are given time to reread texts—but when I left Kabul for Teheran I was pleased with the progress that had been made.

The fact that I had visited Teheran often and that I had already met many high officials of the revolutionary government explains the warm welcome that I received in Iran. Foreign Minister Velayati told me that I could proceed with the "scenario" that I had outlined but added matter-of-factly that Iran would not participate in the proximity talks. My staff associates were upset and suggested a quick return to Islamabad, because Iran's position seemed to destroy the whole scaffolding that we had laboriously built.

I recalled that Zia and Yaqub had conceded that it would be difficult to get Iranian participation "at the same level and intensity" and decided not to give too much importance to Velayati's statement. I therefore told him that I would say in my letter that Iran would be "kept informed of the discussions" and that he would transmit to me "any views that Iran might have on the issues under consideration." Velayati reluctantly agreed.

My own assessment of the consultations held in Islamabad, Kabul, and Teheran coincided essentially with what *Dawn* of Karachi wrote in an editorial shortly after I left the region: "As it is, the three sides have come a long way from their original positions and this flexibility of approach, if sustained, could prove conducive to successful negotiations."[11]

I met Yaqub and Dost at Havana shortly after, during a conference of the nonaligned movement, and felt reassured that everything was in order. They both seemed enthusiastic about what we had accomplished during my trip to the area.

But I was subsequently told that Yaqub was under great pressure because some people in his own Government, and in Washington, felt that he had been too flexible. Even if it had no basis whatsoever, the notion that I was able to manipulate the Foreign Minister when we held private meetings started to circulate in Islamabad. I therefore decided to send him the final text of the letter before signing it. I did not send it to Dost because it would help him if I just faced him with a fait accompli.

Just as soon as Yaqub sent me word that he approved the text, I sent the letter to my three interlocutors and announced that the first round of proximity talks would start in Geneva on June 15, 1982. The Western press corps was deeply skeptical, suggesting with varying degrees of conviction that we had achieved only a paper victory. It made me realize that skepticism would be the standard reaction to each and every step taken during the negotiations. My own reaction was to exude optimism. "The Señor of the tunnel at the end of the light" I was called, but I felt that I had a professional obligation consistently to show confidence in the ultimate success of the negotiations.

IV

The main significance of the first round of negotiations was that it was held at all. Any incident on the ground, any press statement, any explicit or implicit move by friends or opponents of any of the interlocutors, indeed nearly anything at all could have prevented the commencement of the negotiations. I therefore supervised personally the preparation of the rooms that were to be used, chose the furniture, organized office, coffee, and tea services, and ensured the provision of adequate security arrangements. Each delegation would come to the Palais des Nations separately, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, taking turns throughout the week so that each delegation would come roughly the same number of times in the morning and in the afternoon. The two delegations were never to be in the building at the same time.

An important event had taken place in New York a few days before I left for Geneva. Vladimir Shustov, one of the ambassadors at the Soviet mission, asked me to meet him in the delegates lounge and then gave me a paper with a name handwritten on it: Stanislav P. Gavrilov. Shustov told me that Gavrilov would be at Geneva "to maintain liaison" with me. Gavrilov, he added, was an expert on the region and the highest-ranking diplomat in Kabul. Since the Ambassador in Afghanistan was a party man, "we consider [Gavrilov] our Ambassador and he will report on this assignment directly to Gromyko," said Shustov with institutional pride.

I met Gavrilov for the first time on the eve of the opening of the talks. I thus started a formal working relationship with the Soviet Government that was to prove crucial to the achievement of a negotiated solution. It involved an implicit understanding not to tell the Afghans what we had discussed, very often not even the fact that we had met.

I do not believe that I was ever misled by the Soviets. If they could not tell me something, they said so—and I soon realized that when they kept quiet in reaction to one of my suggestions it meant that I could go ahead but that it was awkward or embarrassing for them explicitly to accept it. I always told them in no uncertain terms that I condemned the invasion, and there is no doubt in my mind that all Soviet diplomats felt that it had been a big blunder. They often referred to some "hotheads" in Moscow who thought that a negotiated withdrawal would be humiliating.

At that time the United States was not showing any particular interest in my work. I even heard that State Department officials were making disparaging remarks about my mission. Ambassador George Sherman, one of the deputies of the U.S. permanent representative to the U.N., officially told me that, while supporting a negotiated solution, the United States was not, and did not wish to be, involved in any diplomatic efforts to solve the conflict.

I was therefore somewhat surprised when upon my arrival in Geneva I was invited to lunch by Ambassador Herman Swaebe, a close friend of President Reagan, who was the U.S. Representative at the U.N. Office in Geneva. An amiable gentleman, he seemed embarrassed by the questions, distilling skepticism, of his professional subordinates. After lunch I took Swaebe aside and told him that President Reagan's name would be associated with a Soviet withdrawal no matter what and that the U.S. should therefore support my efforts. He said he would talk with the President at Christmas.

At precisely 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, June 16, 1982, the Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, surrounded by security personnel, the chief of protocol, and a retinue of high and low officials, walked up the marble stairs towards the Salon Français of the Palais des Nations. If he was thinking of the number of meetings relating to his part of the world that had ended in disaster in that same ugly building he did not show it. In the afternoon we had a repeat performance, at a lower level of flourish, when Dost came to the Palais. We thus started the talks that had been the subject of talks for eighteen months.

At the outset of my meetings with each delegation I stressed that progress on

spelling out what had previously been agreed to would be necessary to maintain the momentum generated by my visit to their capitals in April. It would be essential to define at the end of the round the policy elements that would allow me to prepare a first draft of the "comprehensive settlement" for consideration at the next round of negotiations. I suggested that a "Note for the Record," which was to become the usual method of recording agreed-upon conclusions, contain their "instructions" concerning the contents of the draft settlement. I submitted an outline of the document based upon the letter that I had sent after my return from the area. The idea was to force them to reaffirm the understandings already reached and to elaborate upon them in order to move forward.

There was a long discussion about the legal status that the settlement should have. It was the type of discussion that can keep diplomats talking endlessly. A treaty, a resolution of the General Assembly or the Security Council, and a number of other possibilities were mentioned. Pakistan was interested in some kind of U.N. endorsement of the settlement; Afghanistan felt that the U.N. should be kept out of the formalities. Gavrilov told me that Moscow felt equally strong on the subject. I suggested that we first try to have an agreed-upon text of the settlement; by then there would be no problem in deciding on its juridical status. After a series of exchanges about who had started the conflict and about the atrocities that were taking place on the ground, my interlocutors seemed ready to discuss the draft Note.

It again became obvious that the main problems would always be the withdrawal of troops and interference. For Yaqub the central issue was the withdrawal; he repeatedly denied that any interference was taking place. Dost stressed time and again that if interference was stopped, "all other issues" would be resolved. Pakistan insisted that the provisions on withdrawal, including those relating to the "circumstances, modalities, and timing" of the withdrawal, be negotiated. Afghanistan took the position that the withdrawal of Soviet troops would take place "within the context" of the settlement but that all the relevant arrangements would be decided upon "by the States concerned," meaning Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. The text that was eventually adopted left no doubt that the withdrawal would be an integral part of the settlement, but this was to be resisted time and again by Kabul.

In the course of the discussions I became more aware of the animosity and distrust that prevailed between the two delegations and of the emotional reactions that certain issues produced. An indirect reference to a border dispute dating back to the last century, for instance, prompted emotional reactions and heated exchanges. Gavrilov, whom I met regularly, was extremely helpful in persuading Dost to be flexible on specific points and warned me if the Soviets had rigid positions that required "preliminary" discussions between us.

The format of the talks was not, of course, conducive to a businesslike drafting exercise. I produced successive drafts of the whole text whenever I felt that a reasonable number of points of convergence had been reached. Toward the end I was getting desperate with the slow pace of the discussions, which had become, in fact, a series of tortuous negotiations between me and each of my interlocutors. I therefore decided to engage in a Genevese version of shuttle

diplomacy between the Intercontinental Hotel, where Dost was staying, and the rue de Moillebeau (fortunately quite near), where Yaqub had established his headquarters at the Pakistan mission. We were thus able to finalize an agreed-upon text, which contained a fairly detailed description of the contents of the comprehensive settlement. I told the press that I did not think that we could have gone further than we did but that I would have been disappointed if we had not been able to go as far as we went.[12]

I had a long chat with Gavrilov before his departure. Dost and Yaqub had admitted, I stressed at the outset of our conversation, that they would have to tackle the two subjects, withdrawal and interference, that they thought could be avoided during the negotiations. That alone, in my view, would allow progress to be made.

Gavrilov told me that he was still concerned about interference. He pointed out that Kabul and Moscow had accepted the "gimmick" that I had suggested to overcome Pakistan's difficulties because they were sincerely interested in a settlement. Moscow was not sure, however, that it would work. We should think, he added, of a way—perhaps a separate, secret, document—in which Pakistan would undertake specifically to discontinue the operations that were being carried out. I told Gavrilov that he was wrong and, as an example, referred to a map that Dost had shown me, presumably drawn from satellite photographs, of training camps in Pakistani territory. What difference would it make in terms of removing those camps, I asked, if the provisions of the settlement under discussion prescribed that Pakistan should dismantle them or declared them illegal after an agreed-upon date? The existence of camps in the territory of Pakistan would in either case constitute a violation of the settlement.

I also told Gavrilov that President Zia, at the meeting with Waldheim in Taif, had said that the participation of the *mujahideen* in the negotiations "could be tackled at a later stage." Pakistan had thus facilitated the initiation of the diplomatic process, but Yaqub was facing pressures at home, in Washington, and in other Western capitals, which he was trying to diffuse by insisting on the consultations "with the refugees." As a basis for its request Pakistan was invoking the U.N. obligation to protect the refugees and to promote their safe and voluntary return. Perhaps what Pakistan needed was essentially some form of "window dressing" exercise in order to pacify the *mujahideen* leaders. All I was asking was to be allowed to explore the possibilities of working out arrangements that would satisfy Pakistan without creating any difficulties for the Soviet Union.

Gavrilov reacted with strong accusations of bad faith against Pakistan. What Pakistan wanted, he said, was to bring the so-called leaders of the refugees to the negotiating table. They were a bunch of thugs, he added with considerable emphasis, who had left their country well before the invasion. Pakistan had admitted them in the border town of Peshawar solely for the purpose of organizing, with U.S. assistance, counterrevolutionary activities against the Kabul government. The "consultations" would have the effect of giving "those bandits" a political standing that they did not deserve.

I felt that I should raise another, perhaps even more sensitive, point. I did

not need to tell him, I said, what the West thought about the invasion and the Kabul regime. But inasmuch as the negotiations toward a political solution were starting, I felt duty-bound to suggest the initiation of a parallel process of what in similar circumstances elsewhere had been described as "national reconciliation." If it was true, I added, that Pakistan, the United States, and others were engaged in widespread interference activities, the fact was that an overwhelming majority of the Afghan people were against a regime that was perceived as having been imposed by force by a foreign power. A new, broad-based government in Kabul would ensure that the settlement would be implemented peacefully and effectively. Gavrilov said that he knew what I meant and that we should discuss the question at length at a later date. As we shook hands I felt that all the relevant questions were now being considered and that therefore the diplomatic process was in real motion.

III

1982–1983

ANDROPOV:

THE LOST OPPORTUNITY

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4

MAKING THE RUSSIANS BLEED

Selig S. Harrison

Moscow made its first serious attempt to find a way out of the Afghan quagmire during the fifteen-month tenure of Yuri Andropov, from November 1982 until his death in February 1984. Andropov no longer displayed the ambivalence that had marked his attitude toward the 1979 decision to intervene. In internal Communist party debates he became increasingly critical of the occupation as a serious blunder likely to entail growing economic, social, and diplomatic costs for the Soviet Union.

Many of his close associates cite persuasive evidence that Andropov was prepared to withdraw Soviet forces under the aegis of the United Nations despite opposition from the armed forces and from more orthodox Communist leaders. By all accounts, however, he envisaged a withdrawal on terms considerably more favorable to the Soviet Union than those that Mikhail Gorbachev accepted five years later. Precisely what type of settlement he was ready to accept was never tested because Pakistan and the United States were in no mood to bargain. With the Cold War at full tilt, the dominant power groups in Islamabad and Washington deeply distrusted Soviet motives in the U.N. negotiations and regarded it as desirable, in any case, to keep Soviet forces pinned down in a no-win commitment.

In April 1988 Gorbachev agreed to a withdrawal scenario that left the Kabul regime in place but gave no assurance of its survival and carefully sidestepped the issue of its legitimacy. Andropov, by contrast, insisted that Islamabad acknowledge the regime's legitimacy. But he offered to replace Karmal, detested by most Afghans as a Soviet puppet, with a less controversial personality who would share power with non-Communist elements.

For Andropov, the key to the preservation of the regime was to be a projected Pakistani commitment in the U.N. agreement to stop aiding the resistance, in return for the withdrawal and for a reciprocal commitment by Kabul not to aid antigovernment forces in Pakistan. At first, when the U.N. negotiations with Andropov began in April 1983, Islamabad appeared ready to make such a commitment in conjunction with an informal agreement on an acceptable successor to Karmal. As the negotiations proceeded, however, the military regime in Islamabad, prodded by the Reagan Administration, gradually reversed course. The serious prospect of a settlement following the April round of the U.N. Geneva talks forced a showdown in Islamabad. On one side were Yaqub and others who were prepared to compromise in order to secure a withdrawal; on the other side were military leaders, including Zia, who regarded the war as the key to their American support and were content to see it continue indefinitely.

Zia later told me in a conversation shortly before his death that his goals, from the beginning of the war, were to destroy the Communist infrastructure, install a client regime, and bring about a "strategic realignment" in South Asia. "We have earned the right to have a friendly regime there," he declared. "We took risks as a frontline state, and we won't permit it to be like it was before, with Indian and Soviet influence there and claims on our territory. It will be a real Islamic state, part of a pan-Islamic revival that will one day win over the Muslims in the Soviet Union, you will see."[1]

"A Capacity for Realism"

Andropov continues to be a subject of controversy among historians both in the Soviet Union and abroad. Uncritical admirers depict him as a visionary and a reformer with Western tastes and liberal inclinations who would eventually have done more or less what Gorbachev did if he had not fallen victim to a fatal kidney disorder.[2] His critics, focusing on his record as KGB chief, argue that he was a Stalinist in disguise.[3] In this view, he was a more skillful manipulator of Western public opinion than his predecessor but pursued substantially similar domestic and foreign policies that were designed to preserve the status quo.

The reality appears to lie somewhere between these two extremes. Andropov emerges on close analysis as a sophisticated realist who recognized that the country was deteriorating internally and was overextended abroad but was cautious in taking corrective measures. In domestic affairs, his goal was not to replace the Communist system but to create what he called a "civilized socialist order" through a process of carefully managed reform. He was preoccupied with enforcing worker discipline and with ridding the Communist Party of corruption. At the same time, he consciously set the stage for reform by sponsoring a younger generation of Communist leaders who shared his belief in the need for change.

In foreign affairs, he had often differed over the years with Andrei Gromyko and other hard-liners, favoring a more flexible, less doctrinaire approach on

numerous issues. Thus, when he came to power, it was not surprising that he was at the forefront of those in the leadership who were reassessing the costs and the benefits of the Soviet role in the Third World, above all in Afghanistan.

The first demonstrations of Andropov's independence on foreign policy issues came during his tenure as Director of the International Department of the Central Committee from 1957 to 1963. He strongly opposed Nikita Khruschchev's decision to recall all Soviet technicians from China in 1960 as a riposte to Beijing's persistent anti-Soviet propaganda. Sinologist Lev Deliusin, who was his principal adviser on China, recalled that "he felt we should not overreact in anger, merely to strike a pose. We had provided the advisers on certain agreed terms, and he felt we should keep our word, taking a long-term view."[4] Similarly, as the war in Vietnam began to heat up, Andropov wanted the Soviet Union to press North Vietnam for a political and diplomatic approach to the problem. "Gromyko didn't understand the complexity of the problem," Deliusin told me, "and he didn't want to understand. He encouraged [North] Vietnam to seek a military solution. Andropov argued that the problem was essentially political and that a way should be found to deal with the Americans diplomatically."

When Andropov went to Hanoi on a special mission in 1964 after becoming a secretary of the Central Committee, Deliusin accompanied him. "He convinced our Vietnamese friends, with great difficulty, that they should make contact with America through Poland and France to find a way out," Deliusin stated. Gromyko, albeit skeptical, did not block Andropov, and the Paris peace talks on Vietnam eventually resulted.

Deliusin painted a picture of a "contradictory man with one foot in the old orthodoxy but a capacity for realism and a very open style. He was a man who liked to discuss problems very frankly and listen to a variety of views." Valentin Falin, who also worked closely with Andropov, depicts him in the same vein as a man who "knew how to listen and to think realistically, not dogmatically."[5]

Andropov became chief of the KGB in 1967 but did not begin to play a decisive foreign policy role until his rise to the second-ranking position in the Politburo following the death of Suslov in January 1982. According to Georgiy Kornienko, who was then First Deputy Foreign Minister, it was Andropov's strong support in the Politburo during early 1982 that opened the way for Soviet cooperation with a U.N. mediation role in Afghanistan.[6] Andropov's attitude, said Falin, differed markedly from that of Gromyko, who had "hesitated initially about the idea of inviting the United Nations to help solve the problem." Following visits to Afghanistan in late 1981 and early 1982, Falin said, Andropov "began to say that we should be looking for a political rather than a military solution. He became rather disgusted with our Afghan friends, who were only too ready to give the honor of fighting to the Soviet troops while they themselves were too busy with factional quarrels, even the Afghan Army itself." Falin remembers several conversations in which Andropov expressed such views, especially one in October 1982 when "[Andropov] felt it was evident we had to do something to get out. But for him it was harder to do this than it was

for Gorbachev because Andropov undoubtedly took part in the decision to introduce our forces."

Kornienko said that when Andropov visited Kabul in February 1982, he concluded that the Afghan government should be broadened to include non-Communists in prominent positions but that "he failed to get Babrak Karmal to agree." This encounter with Karmal was to prove important in shaping Andropov's favorable response to Pakistan's demand for the replacement of the Afghan leader in the early stages of the 1983 round of U.N. negotiations. A KGB official who accompanied Andropov said that he caught chicken pox on this trip, touching off the chain reaction of medical problems that culminated in his death two years later.[7]

After Andropov became General Secretary of the Communist Party in November 1982, his initial signals on Afghanistan created the fleeting impression that big changes were in the making. Following Brezhnev's funeral on November 12, Andropov made a point of meeting privately for forty minutes with Zia and his Foreign Minister, Yaqub Khan, prompting Zia to report "a new freshness and flexibility on the Soviet side."[8] Yaqub recalled that Andropov was "in a reflective mood and gave us the impression that there were divisions within the Politburo on Afghanistan, that he had been involved in an agonizing decision taken against what he thought right. He seemed earnest about the importance of finding a solution but under great strain."[9] Speaking in New York a week later, Zia declared that "there now exists on the Soviet side a recognition of the need for an early resolution of the crisis."[10]

By December 16 *Pravda* had reaffirmed a tough line, referring to the "irrevocable" nature of the Afghan revolution,[11] and by December 31 Tass had declared Moscow's intention to "fulfil up to the end its internationalist duty" toward what it described as "the legal government" in Kabul.[12] The reason for this volte face was that Andropov's freedom of action in foreign affairs was constrained by a running power struggle with his defeated rival, Konstantin Chernenko, who was allied with Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, chief of staff of the armed forces. Just ten days after his meeting with Zia, the limitations on his power were sharply underlined at meetings of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet on November 22 and 23. Faced with Chernenko's opposition, Andropov was unable to win approval for his appointees as secretary in charge of two key Central Committee departments, and the posts were left vacant for six months. Both men wanted the presidency of the Supreme Soviet, a position that carried with it the chairmanship of the Defense Council. Andropov was strong enough to block Chernenko but was forced to keep these posts vacant until he could take them over himself in May 1983.

As Ivan Zemtsov has observed, "Andropov was the conductor but not the maestro," presiding over a collective leadership in which varying degrees of his power were delegated to others, especially after he began dialysis for a kidney ailment in February 1983. Ogarkov controlled the armed forces; Andrei Gromyko, foreign policy; G. A. Aliev, the Azerbaijan party boss, the security services; N. A. Tikhonov, the domestic economy, and Chernenko, the party apparatus.[13]

Gromyko had supported Andropov as the successor to Brezhnev but had more orthodox views on many foreign policy issues. His power was enhanced when he became First Deputy Prime Minister in addition to Foreign Minister in March. In pushing his foreign policy initiatives, Andropov also had to deal with Chernenko directly as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Soviet.

Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov, like Gromyko, had helped Andropov to win power and exacted, in return, considerable autonomy. But it was Marshal Ogarkov who dominated defense policy. On numerous issues, Ogarkov was pushing hard-line policies that brought him into a collision with Andropov, among them what to do in Afghanistan and whether to seek a diplomatic compromise with the Reagan Administration over its deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe. At several points during his brief tenure, Andropov attempted to engineer Ogarkov's replacement with Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who espoused more flexible positions and was later to become a key adviser to Gorbachev.

In his very first pronouncements after taking power, Andropov made clear that he wanted to move in new directions. He created a sensation in his inaugural address as the new General Secretary at the November 22 Central Committee plenum. Pointing to the need for decentralization and autonomy in the administration of state enterprises and collective farms, he suggested that it was "necessary to assess and take into consideration the experience of fraternal countries." This seemingly modest comment challenged sixty-five years of Soviet propaganda that had enshrined Moscow as the infallible trailblazer in socialism, offering the model that all others should emulate. Andropov followed up this bombshell with a variety of further criticisms of Soviet economic performance that set the stage for Gorbachev's subsequent reforms. Sergei Rogov of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute has emphasized that Andropov's readiness to take a realistic new look at Soviet domestic conditions led naturally to his recognition that the Afghan occupation was a mistake. "Once you depart from the idea of the Soviet Union as a fulfilled social dream," Rogov said, "once you concede you are not perfect, then you naturally begin to question a foreign policy that includes the export of your model and your mistakes to other places."[14]

One of the themes in Andropov's November 22 speech that recurred frequently in later months was that new economic and military commitments abroad should be restricted in order to permit greater attention to remedying economic ills at home. Andropov cited as scripture a statement by Lenin that "we are exercising our main influence on the world revolutionary process through our own economic policy."[15] Two days later, Chernenko, writing in a party journal, countered by quoting another statement by Lenin that "Soviet power gave the world revolution priority over any national sacrifices, however hard they may be."[16]

Andropov confronted an unyielding anti-Soviet posture in Washington that made it increasingly difficult for him to justify new foreign policy initiatives in internal Soviet debates. Nevertheless, on December 21, in his keynote address at celebrations marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Soviet state, he offered

Washington major arms control concessions that went "far beyond the reductions called for in SALT II."[17] In return, he asked for a halt to the projected U.S. missile deployments in Europe. This conciliatory approach contrasted markedly with the bitter condemnation of American arms control policies by Gromyko and by official party organs identified with the Foreign Minister. The ambivalent signals coming out of Moscow during this period were reflected in continuing tension between spokesmen for Gromyko and prominent commentators who had behind-the-scenes encouragement from Andropov.[18]

In a year-end interview with an American correspondent, Andropov suggested a summit meeting with President Reagan, and a week later, the Political Declaration issued by the Warsaw Pact summit gave unprecedented emphasis to accommodation with the West. Andropov attended this summit, his first and only trip abroad as General Secretary. Foreshadowing Gorbachev's "new thinking," the Declaration focused not on the class struggle but on the "global problems of a social, economic, demographic, and ecological character faced by mankind." It called for swift, informal U.S.-Soviet troop and arms cuts in Europe and endorsed the U.N. mediation effort on Afghanistan that had just been initiated.[19]

"Andropov wanted to make significant changes in our international policy," recalled Vadim Zagladin, "but he did not have enough time in office. Another very important thing was that he was not well much of the time and that gave Gromyko a free hand. Andropov was particularly interested in missiles in Europe, and Afghanistan, but there were also many personalities who were against him. In the case of Afghanistan, these were the same personalities who had insisted on the decision to go in."[20]

Pakistan Reverses Course

In contrast to the rigid attitudes on the Afghan issue that were still widespread within the Soviet leadership, Soviet public opinion had become increasingly hostile to the war by the time that Andropov took power. "Whereas only a few people in the Soviet Union openly protested the sending of troops into Prague in 1968," former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has written, "after 1979 the majority condemned the Afghan adventure either directly or indirectly."[21]

Soviet specialists on Afghanistan in research institutes linked to the Central Committee, whose doubts about Soviet military intervention had been ignored during the Brezhnev years, found a more hospitable reception after Andropov took over. When Yuri Gankovsky prepared a forty-five-page report for the Foreign Ministry in January 1983 calling for a reappraisal of Afghan policy, Andropov's office asked for an abstract. Three days later, Gankovsky said, Andropov telephoned him. "He expressed his surprise and asked me whether the situation was really that bad. It was quite clear from several questions he raised that he was thinking in terms of some sort of settlement. But he was very preoccupied at that time with other things." In early February Andropov sent Gankovsky and sixteen other specialists to Kabul to assess the situation.

As the *Times* of London observed, Andropov made his first move to prepare the way for possible diplomatic moves on Afghanistan in late February by orchestrating "a spate of articles . . . publicly proclaiming what before was only whispered: that 'our boys' in Afghanistan are being slaughtered by rebels, and that the rebel forces are sufficiently powerful and skilled in mountain warfare to pin down both Soviet troops and armor."[22] In early March the *Washington Post* reported a consensus of diplomats in Moscow that Andropov was seeking "to hasten efforts toward a political resolution of the problem by opening it up to internal discussion and by creating a sense of crisis about Afghanistan."[23]

Minutes of a March 10 Politburo meeting show that Gromyko was sanguine about the prospects for sustaining the Communist regime in Kabul and was opposed to accepting a withdrawal timetable at the April round of Geneva negotiations then approaching. Seeking approval for a three-year, $222 million Afghan aid program, he declared that "the situation is stabilizing. Right now, at this point, we should not give Pakistan a concrete time frame for the withdrawal of our troops. We have to do everything we can to find a mutually acceptable settlement, but one can tell this will be a long process."

Andropov struck a more ambivalent note. Recalling the "difficult" decision to send troops to Afghanistan, he questioned such large aid outlays, calling for a "political" approach that would permit a "flexible" response to developments in Kabul and Geneva. "In solving the Afghan problem," he said, "we must proceed from the existing realities. What do you expect? This is a feudal country, where the tribes have always been masters in their own territory. What matters is not Pakistan's position. Our adversary is American imperialism, and that is why we cannot give up."[24]

On the eve of the April round of U.N. negotiations, Cordovez and Pérez de Cuéllar conferred with Andropov on March 28 in an historic hour-long encounter. The Soviet leader's urgent emphasis on the need for an early settlement and his credible exposition of why he wanted one led the Secretary General to declare that he was "full of optimism concerning the possibility of settling this problem. My talks with the Soviet leaders were extremely interesting, and I found them supportive of my endeavor."[25]

What Andropov said to Pérez de Cuéllar and Cordovez on March 28 and what transpired in the hopeful April round and the abortive June round will be recounted in detail by Cordovez in Chapter 5. On the surface, the negotiations on the draft agreement focused on the language that would make clear Pakistani and American willingness to cut off aid; on the legal form of the commitment to withdraw Soviet forces; and on whether Pakistan would finalize the provisions covering the termination of aid before Moscow gave its withdrawal timetable. Yaqub did agree in April to finalize the aid cutoff clauses, but on the condition that they would take effect only as part of a package deal that included an acceptable withdrawal timetable. Equally important, Yaqub had shown flexibility on another critical issue that went beyond the text of the agreement itself: the future of the Kabul regime.

In Andropov's eyes, this was the transcendent issue in the negotiations. He

was not prepared to see the replacement of the Communist regime. According to Kornienko and Gankovsky, he envisaged a settlement in which a modified, more broadly based version of the regime would continue in place following the Soviet withdrawal and the Army and the security services would remain intact under their existing leadership. However, he was prepared to consider the replacement of Karmal with a less controversial successor who would give a significant role to non-Communists, as he had unsuccessfully urged Karmal to do during his 1982 visit to the Afghan capital. Once this was done, he would expect Pakistan to negotiate directly with the new regime.

During the prelude to the April round, Yaqub had treated this approach as an acceptable one. On November 25, 1982, Yaqub had told me in New York that "we can turn the clock back to early 1979. We can restore something like the situation that obtained just before the Soviets came in—that is, a 'national Communist' setup. But we seriously doubt that we can turn the clock back before the Communists took over in 1978." He recalled that Pakistan had recognized the Communist regime prior to the Soviet occupation. The key to a settlement, he said, was the replacement of Karmal, who had become a symbol of the occupation. Then he pointedly reminded me of Zia's frequent statements that "he could not shake hands with the man who had come riding into Kabul on a Soviet tank."

I told him that Soviet diplomats had indicated a willingness to replace Karmal with Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand, a technocrat who had not played a prominent role in the ruling PDPA. Would this be acceptable? Pakistan would go ahead with a settlement that contained satisfactory withdrawal provisions, he replied, provided that "anyone but Karmal" became the leader of the Kabul regime. But he added a caveat: The settlement should take the form of a U.N. declaration rather than a bilateral treaty with Kabul that would signify Pakistani recognition of the Kabul regime.

Yaqub has acknowledged that the Keshtmand scenario was discussed "informally" with Cordovez during the April negotiations.[26] What Pakistan would have preferred, writes one of his top aides, was "a meaningful, broad-based government marked by political compromise, possibly involving Zahir Shah. . . . But it was felt that a cosmetic change, Keshtmand for Karmal, would make it difficult for Pakistan to refuse to conclude an agreement or to resist direct talks with the new Afghan government."[27]

The optimism generated by the April round resulted primarily from the hope that a compromise between Moscow and Islamabad on the Kabul regime was in the offing. But this hope proved to be short-lived. As we shall see, by June 9, when Yaqub visited Moscow on the eve of the June round, a split had developed within the Pakistani leadership over what would constitute an acceptable settlement and how rapidly Islamabad could move toward an accord without alienating the United States, conservative Arab patrons, and Afghan resistance groups. This split explains why Yaqub, operating with a limited mandate, backed away from the position he had taken in April.

Precisely what happened during Yaqub's Moscow visit remains a subject of dispute. According to the Soviet version, instead of confirming that Pakistan

accepted the aid cutoff provisions and was prepared to implement them in conjunction with a satisfactory withdrawal timetable, Yaqub told Gromyko that the agreement was "wide open" and that Islamabad would give its final acceptance to the aid cutoff plan only when and if Moscow simultaneously put forward its timetable. Instead of suggesting a face-lifting and broadening of the Kabul regime, to be arranged by Moscow, he spoke of a process of "self-determination" that would lead to its replacement.

Yaqub acknowledged several months later that he had reversed course, blaming a statement by Cordovez in early May that "the draft text of the settlement was 95 percent completed." "This stirred up all the people in Islamabad and abroad who opposed the settlement," he told me during a New York dinner conversation. "It became necessary to slow down and to cool it, to placate the feelings of the Afghan refugees and of our allies that we were doing something behind their backs."[28] But in any case, Yaqub explained, Gromyko's concept of a package deal was not what Pakistan thought had been accepted in April. Islamabad wanted one integrated agreement to which all parties would subscribe. Gromyko insisted that the withdrawal timetable be covered only in a Moscow-Kabul agreement, with the aid cutoff to be contained in a separate Kabul-Islamabad agreement. Moreover, the Soviet leader was "uneasy," Yaqub said, about the very idea of a precise withdrawal timetable.

Vasily Safronchuk, who later became an Undersecretary General of the United Nations, directed Afghan policy in the Soviet Foreign Ministry in 1983 and was present at the meeting between Gromyko and the Pakistani leader. He said that the change in Yaqub's attitude between April and June was evident immediately, producing a corresponding stiffening in the Soviet position. "They kept harping on the timetable for the withdrawal," he observed, "but what was the point of talking about the timetable if they were not prepared to conclude an agreement with the other party in the negotiations?"[29]

Andropov's dilemma was that the PDPA was widely viewed internationally as a Communist party even though Moscow had vacillated on the doctrinal issue of whether the party was "national democratic" or Communist in character. Whether or not the abandonment of the PDPA would have actually violated the Brezhnev Doctrine, it would have been perceived as doing so, he feared, thus potentially setting in motion forces that could have undermined Communist regimes in eastern Europe. Andropov was prepared to dilute the PDPA's power. Unlike Gorbachev, however, he was not ready to risk an uncertain political outcome that could lead to an anti-Soviet regime. In an interview with the West German news magazine *Der Spiegel,* he asked: "Would the United States not care what kind of government rules in Nicaragua? Nicaragua is an enormous distance from America. We have a common border with Afghanistan, and we are defending our national interests by helping Afghanistan."[30]

Karmal continually criticized the U.N. mediation process, demanding that Pakistan agree to direct talks with Cordovez present. Safronchuk said that only continuing Soviet pressure had forced Karmal to accept mediation and to accede to the pivotal Cordovez formula under which Kabul would agree not to aid antigovernment forces in Pakistan in return for the projected commitment by

Islamabad to stop aiding the resistance. Kabul insisted that any concessions be made in direct talks. "We knew that Pakistan would not agree to that," Safronchuk explained, "but we were not prepared for their refusal to have anything to do with Kabul at any stage. They made clear that they were not prepared to conclude an agreement either directly or indirectly with any PDPA regime. Their position has been quite consistent since 1983. They have always intended to install a regime of their choice in Kabul."

Gennadi Yevstafiev, then a special assistant to Pérez de Cuéllar, told me on several occasions during 1983 that Andropov had been prepared to offer an eight-month timetable in the June round until the Pakistani volte face.[31] If Yaqub had been willing to sign a bilateral agreement with Kabul, the timetable could have been written directly into it. But in any case, he stated, the eight-month commitment would have been conveyed to the Secretary General and would have been spelled out formally in a Moscow-Kabul agreement. Pérez de Cuéllar could then have issued a declaration setting forth the agreement reached at Geneva. Moscow had not insisted that Islamabad conclude a bilateral agreement with Kabul giving the regime de jure recognition. All that would have been required was for Pakistan to accept de facto coexistence with a modified version of the regime.

Yevstafiev was widely regarded as the ranking KGB operative in the U.N. apparatus. Was his story disinformation? Kornienko gave a similar account but said that "no one knows what the precise timetable would have been."

According to Zagladin, after his June 9 encounter with Yaqub Gromyko persuaded Andropov that the United States wanted to keep Soviet forces pinned down in Afghanistan and that neither Islamabad nor Washington was ready for a settlement. If the United States had been actively supporting Cordovez, he believes, Andropov could have prevailed over his opponents, "though it might not have been easy."

The Andropov Legacy

The picture that emerges from discussions with his confidants is that the ailing Andropov had given broad instructions but was not closely monitoring or directing the Soviet role in the negotiations after April. Nevertheless, shortly before his hospitalization in August, he demonstrated his continuing preoccupation with the Afghan issue by summoning Karmal to Moscow for a secret meeting. "Andropov recognized that our presence in Afghanistan was a major impediment to improving relations with the West," Kornienko said. "He wanted to make absolutely clear to Karmal that he should not count on the indefinite or protracted stay of Soviet forces in Afghanistan and must prepare for our withdrawal by taking urgent steps to stabilize his regime." The minutes of his meeting with Karmal showed that Andropov was "very straightforward and blunt with him. He didn't give him a deadline, but he stressed several times that we would not be able to stay in Afghanistan much longer. But Babrak simply didn't believe him."

During the last months before he entered the hospital, Andropov made a significant attempt to ease tensions with the United States. President Reagan had made his "evil empire" speech in March, followed soon afterward by his announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The resulting atmosphere of confrontation had "poisoned everything, including the Afghan negotiations," said Kornienko, and Andropov had gradually concluded that progress on Afghanistan would have to come as part of an overall improvement in relations. On June 15, his sixty-ninth birthday, he told a Central Committee plenum that "the threat of a nuclear war overhanging the world makes one appraise in a new way the basic meaning of the activities of the entire Communist movement."

Andropov made an overture to Reagan in a secret letter on July 4 that has still not been published in full. Martin Anderson, then one of Reagan's advisers, said that it was "a nice letter indicating a clear willingness to talk seriously about the subject most dear to Reagan's heart—the destruction of nuclear weapons."[32] Reagan responded in a handwritten letter on July 11 that was considerably watered down by his advisers. "If it had been sent as Reagan originally wrote it," Don Oberdorfer observed, "it would have been a historic document that first established the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons, a goal that the President, almost alone in his administration, ardently sought."[33] In his initial draft, the President suggested that if the two sides could agree on mutual, verifiable arms reductions in the Geneva talks then under way, "could this not be a first step toward the elimination of all such weapons?"[34] When Reagan's advisers saw the draft, however, they immediately objected, just as they did three years later at the Reykjavik summit with Gorbachev when Gorbachev proposed complete nuclear disarmament.

"The experts were horrified by the idea of eliminating nuclear weapons," Oberdorfer said, "considering this to be impractical and heedless of the nuclear deterrence that had kept the peace since 1945." At the insistence of his national security adviser, William Clark, Reagan confined himself to pleas for a more serious effort to reach agreement in the Geneva arms control talks. Significantly, he specifically mentioned South Asia as one of the other topics that should be explored through "private, candid" communication. Andropov replied on August 4 with a note once again emphasizing arms control, and Reagan sent a still unpublished reply on August 24. One week later, Korean Airlines flight 007 was shot down over Soviet territory, and Soviet-American relations went into the deep freeze. Nevertheless, Oberdorfer reports, Andropov sent still another secret note to Reagan on January 28, 1984, shortly before his death, signifying a renewed desire to reopen communications.[35]

Although Andropov was unable to implement most of his foreign policy agenda, he set the stage for the changes later carried out by Gorbachev. In a formal sense, Gorbachev was not involved in foreign policy during 1983, given his role as Andropov's principal lieutenant on domestic issues. Nevertheless, though not a member of the Afghanistan Commission of the Politburo, he sat in on its meetings. Valentin Falin has stated that Gorbachev was the only one present who ever questioned Gromyko, albeit subtly.

Nikolai Shishlin, long one of Gorbachev's close advisers, said that Gor-

bachev's thinking on Afghanistan crystallized during 1983. Shishlin pointed to the strong opposition to the Afghan war expressed by the Soviet Ambassador to Canada, Aleksandr Yakovlev, when Gorbachev visited Canada to study agricultural problems in May 1983. "Andropov's attitude was clear," Shishlin recalled, "but Yakovlev had thought it all through much more thoroughly." In his role as a key foreign policy adviser to Gorbachev after his return from Canada, Yakovlev continued to lay the foundations for the Afghan withdrawal and for the broader innovations of *perestroika*. "It all began in 1983. The reason that Gorbachev was able to act so much more decisively in foreign affairs than in domestic policy was largely because of the reappraisal set in motion under Andropov."[36]

Casey and the U.N. Negotiations

Was there a lost opportunity for a Soviet withdrawal in 1983? If the United States had actively supported Cordovez, would Andropov have prevailed over his opponents, as Vadim Zagladin believes?

This is likely to remain one of the important unresolved issues among the many "might have beens" in the history of the Cold War. But there can be no doubt about the fact that the United States strongly disliked the U.N. approach to a settlement during 1983 and that the American attitude tipped the scales in the debate within the Pakistani leadership between April and June. Ironically, during the very period when Andropov was groping for a way to disengage from Afghanistan, supporters of stepped-up American involvement were on the ascendant in the Reagan Administration.

The driving force behind the push for a greater American role was CIA Director William Casey. As his power within the Administration grew, so did his aggressiveness on the Afghan issue. President Reagan was grateful to Casey for his capable performance as Republican campaign chairman during the election campaign. Having turned down Casey's bid to be Secretary of State, Reagan acceded to his request for full cabinet rank. It was unprecedented for a CIA Director to have a seat at the cabinet table and a direct voice in policy making. Casey also upset precedent by obtaining an office in the Old Executive Office Building, immediately down the hall from the National Security Council staff and just across a private courtyard from the west wing of the White House. Martin Anderson, who observed Casey at work from his own vantage point as a member of the Reagan inner circle, wrote that he spent as much of his time in this strategically situated office as he did at the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Anderson has recounted how Casey dominated a succession of the President's national security advisers, "solidifying his control over the entire domain of intelligence, including covert action."[37]

Casey focused single-mindedly on building up weapons aid to the Afghan resistance and looked on the U.N. negotiations as a Soviet propaganda ploy. "His underlying assumption was that the Soviets would never leave," recalled Graham Fuller, who worked closely with him as National Intelligence Officer

for the Near East and South Asia beginning in 1982. "I shared that view at the time," Fuller said. "We felt there was little hope of getting them out, but that we should make them pay a very high price."[38] Charles Cogan, Director of Covert Operations in the Near East and South Asia in 1983, added that Casey "thought if we tied them down it would keep them from engaging in further adventures, especially against Pakistan."[39] Casey's Deputy Director, John McMahon, by contrast, argued that weapons aid and diplomacy could and should be combined to get the Soviets out. "I was one of the guys pushing the Afghan aid program from the start, contrary to some reports," McMahon told me. "My objection was that we didn't have a foreign policy to back it up. I made it clear at the highest levels throughout 1983 and afterward that I felt we had to have a political settlement. If a covert action is not based in foreign policy objectives, it's pure fun and games, it's no basis for achieving anything."[40] "McMahon thought that putting pressure on the Russians was a necessary accompaniment of a diplomatic strategy to get them out," said General Edward C. Meyer, then army Chief of Staff. "Casey would *say* that he wanted them out, but he actually wanted them to send more and more Russians down there and take casualties."[41]

It was during early 1983 that a group of Reagan political appointees in the Pentagon led by Assistant Secretary for Policy Richard Perle began to press for Pentagon control of an upgraded covert aid program in Afghanistan. Perle displayed the same ideological anti-Soviet zeal concerning Afghanistan that he showed on arms control and other issues. He recruited his own like-minded intelligence staff, with its own travel budget, to counter what he considered the "soft" assessments of Soviet intentions on the part of the State Department and the resulting inadequacy of the Afghan effort.

Perle's two key advisers on Afghanistan, Elie Krakowski and Harold Rhode, lobbied vigorously to build up conservative support both within the Administration and in Congress for a more activist Afghan policy. According to Krakowski, "it was increasingly obvious by early 1983 that what was being done was very insufficient and that if things continued unchanged, the resistance would be defeated. So we agitated for more help and a more coherent strategy."[42] Perle and his staff "came in with a definite agenda relating to Afghanistan," recalled General Meyer. "They were anxious to increase the Pentagon's role in providing more and better equipment to the Afghans as well as people to assist with the transfer of the equipment. It was clearly unusual for them to have their own separate intelligence network by which they were gathering information on Soviet activities in that region."

Perle was unable to challenge Casey's control of the Afghan aid program. However, his efforts served to accelerate the pace of Casey's own plans for a bigger program and to stimulate congressional interest in the Afghan war that was initially spearheaded by conservatives but gradually embraced some liberals. In May 1983 Senator Paul Tsongas and ninety other Senators cosponsored a resolution that called for expanded aid and criticized the Administration for providing just enough aid so that Afghans "can fight and die, but not enough for them to win." The resolution soon became embroiled in controversy and was

not enacted until late 1984. But its introduction reflected a sharpening focus in Washington on winning the war militarily and indifference or outright hostility toward what was happening in the Geneva negotiations.

For all practical purposes, Casey was in control of American relations with Pakistan during the crucial months before and during the April and June rounds of negotiations. Both the White House and the State Department were "completely preoccupied" during this period with a diplomatic effort to get Israel to withdraw from Lebanon, Geoffrey Kemp said.[43] The Lebanon negotiations dragged on from December 1982 until the conclusion of a disengagement agreement on May 17, 1983, and its implementation in the weeks thereafter. "We were not particularly worried, in any case, about the Afghan negotiations," Kemp explained. "There was some concern, but we trusted Zia on the Afghan issue. The general mood was that the Afghan policy was working. As long as the Russians were bleeding and hurting, we were doing fine."

As Bob Woodward wrote, Casey had "the closest relationship with Zia of any member of the Reagan Administration. So when Zia wanted assistance from the United States or just needed someone to listen, his avenue was Casey."[44] The CIA's Office of Technical Services provided specialists who helped Zia to maintain his personal security, and its station in Islamabad became "one of the biggest in the world." Charles Cogan remembers "four or five" meetings between Casey and Zia in Washington and Islamabad during 1982 and 1983. One of these meetings occurred in late March 1983, according to Casey's biographer Joseph Persico.[45] When Casey visited Saudi Arabia in May, did he pay another visit to Islamabad? Former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Ronald I. Spiers said that he cannot be certain of the precise dates of Casey's "frequent visits that year" but that he "might well have" visited during May.

Spiers does recall clearly that Foreign Minister Yaqub was not among those invited to the small dinners given by Zia for Casey. In addition to Spiers, those present were Cogan, who accompanied Casey; the Islamabad CIA Station Chief, Howard Hart, and ISI Director Akhtar Rahman Khan. Spiers did not find Yaqub's absence surprising, since there were "significant divisions" within the power structure over Afghan policy. Yaqub was "far more positive" about the U.N. negotiations than Zia and the Army high command, with Zia "very skeptical" and his chief of staff at the time, General K. M. Arif, "even more skeptical."[46]

Did Casey tell Zia not to let Yaqub go too far and too fast in the U.N. negotiations? Spiers said that he never heard him do so, observing that he was not present during Casey's meetings with Zia. "It was no secret," Spiers added, "that he didn't believe the Russians had any intention of leaving and that any withdrawal agreement could be trusted." In a conversation on May 8, 1983, Cogan confidently asserted to me that Pakistan would not conclude the projected settlement in June "or ever." He went on to say that Zia "knows how we feel about it. He recognizes that this will be a long, long war, and he is committed all the way. He and General Rahman fully accept our view that Pakistan's security is best assured by keeping the Russians tied down there."

Whatever was going on through other channels, Spiers declared, the official

American policy that he conveyed to Yaqub was supportive of the U.N. effort. "Nothing I expressed or transmitted could have been interpreted otherwise." As for what State Department officials were saying in Washington, notably Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger, who was in charge of Afghan policy, "there was indifference and skepticism, but not hostility. Maybe some of his comments were interpreted as opposition. Maybe Howard Hart conveyed that attitude to Akhtar, I don't know."

During a conversation on March 8, 1983, Eagleburger was upset when I suggested that the settlement might crystallize at the impending second round of negotiations in April. He emphasized that the U.S. would welcome a "satisfactory" settlement that would bring about a Soviet withdrawal. Yaqub, he recalled, had asked him accusingly on a visit in November 1982 whether American policy was "to keep the Russians tied down in Afghanistan." "That is not our policy," Eagleburger told me, "but we can't go for a flaky settlement. We are disturbed by the absence of a political process, all of this uncertainty over the future of the regime and the resistance. We could find ourselves locked into something with damaging implications." But he added that it would be "awkward to go against Pakistan" and that the Administration would keep its options open. He noted with some irritation that the United States had not yet been given a text of the emerging U.N. draft agreement either by the U.N. or by Pakistan.

Hawks and Doves in Islamabad

The aftermath of the April round was marked by expressions of optimism from both Pakistani and U.N. sources that set off alarm bells in Washington and in conservative Arab capitals. Yaqub, at a press conference on April 26, treated the possibility of a withdrawal with the utmost seriousness. Pakistan, he said, believed that Andropov would "sincerely stick" to his "categorical" affirmations that "the Soviet Union seriously intends to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan." Asked if the pullout might start as soon as September, he responded only that it would be "indiscreet" to comment on the "very dicey" question of timing. When a reporter asked whether the withdrawal would be "gradual or in one go," he responded that "it is not likely to be in one stroke, but the question of whether it is gradual or from geographic areas is a matter of detail." Badgered by questions concerning the replacement of the Communist regime by an "Islamic" government, he answered sarcastically that "Afghanistan, which is 100 percent an Islamic country, could not possibly have a Buddhist government. As regards the Communist government, it is for the refugees themselves to decide what form of government they would support."[47]

Up to this point, Moscow had never made a public commitment to the timetable concept. On May 19 Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan Vitaly Smirnoff publicly confirmed Kabul's "willingness to give a timetable for the withdrawal of the total Soviet contingent."[48] The form of this commitment was to remain the focus of protracted bargaining, but the fact that Moscow had gone on record

added to a mood of growing excitement over the possibilities for a breakthrough in June.

Pakistani public opinion was overwhelmingly favorable to the settlement, reflecting concern over the refugee influx and fears of Soviet border pressures. Yet the only political party then supporting the Zia regime, the Islamic fundamentalist Jamaat Islami, bitterly attacked him during May for supporting the U.N. effort.

General K. M. Arif, who was Zia's army Chief of Staff in 1983, said that "political input" from the Jamaat and, above all, from the resistance groups

> had a tremendous impact on us. The *mujahideen* feelings may not have been known to Yaqub as much as they were to Zia. The *mujahideen* felt at that time that with all the aid they could force a military victory. So after [Cordovez's] "95 percent" statement, their attitude to the negotiations became more strident. Of course, the reality is they never had any staying power. They could not dislodge the Russians from their fixed positions. We knew that. While we worked on the Geneva negotiations, our thought process was that the Soviets would not leave.[49]

Judging by the available evidence, it appears unlikely that Washington had to use heavy-handed pressure to restrain Islamabad. All it had to do was to suggest now and then in off-the-record press briefings that a settlement in Afghanistan "would mean that Pakistan would slip back in the queue for U.S. military and economic aid."[50] Faced with negative signals from American and Saudi officials and bitter opposition from Pakistani and Afghan fundamentalists, Zia and Arif pulled the reins on Yaqub themselves. As Yaqub put it in the conversation related earlier, he was forced to "slow down and to cool it" in order to placate domestic and foreign critics.

Zia convened a series of interagency meetings on Afghanistan in May that reviewed the concessions made by Yaqub in April and instructed him to back off from a key understanding relating to the Pakistani aid cutoff. The withdrawal scenario accepted in April centered around a formula known as "D-Day plus 30" under which the aid cutoff would be completed within thirty days after the conclusion of the settlement. Zia and Arif insisted that the cutoff take place only if Soviet military operations were concurrently terminated.[51] At first glance, this appeared to be a reasonable demand, but it would have left resistance forces free to carry on operations against immobilized Soviet forces during the withdrawal process.

Zia sent Yaqub on a trip to Washington, London, Riyadh, and Beijing that underlined the opposition to the settlement on the part of Pakistan's foreign friends and patrons. When Yaqub arrived in Washington to discuss the June round, he was greeted with a barrage of press leaks announcing major increases in U.S. aid to the resistance. The sources of some of these leaks, I learned from the journalists involved, were officials in the CIA and the Pentagon who wanted to undercut the negotiations. Facing hostile questions at a press briefing on May 24 that I attended, Yaqub held out no hopes for an early breakthrough but said with a note of defiance that Pakistan had "no intention of being the suckers to bleed the Soviets white in Afghanistan."

Pakistan had passed on the twenty-page draft of the U.N. agreement to the United States after the April round, and Eagleburger had assigned a State Department lawyer to go over it with U.N. lawyers in mid-May. Yaqub and two advisers subsequently reviewed the text with Secretary of State George Shultz, Eagleburger, and three other concerned U.S. officials during a ninety-minute meeting on May 25, 1983. Except for saying that the United States would not stand in the way of an agreement acceptable to Pakistan, Shultz let Eagleburger do most of the talking. According to several of those present, Eagleburger emphasized that the United States considered the agreement unworkable in the absence of an explicit provision for the replacement of the Kabul regime.

The antagonism toward the settlement in Washington and the other capitals visited by Yaqub gave ammunition to his critics in Islamabad. When he returned, he was instructed to backpedal during his Moscow visit. "The basic issue that divided me and my colleagues during this period," Yaqub told me in 1991, "was whether the Russians were serious about leaving. I believed they were, even in 1983. Akhtar and the ISI, and Casey, felt strongly they were not. Akhtar regarded Geneva as a potential sellout because it didn't include the *mujahideen* as participants who would emerge in control of the follow-on government. He thought it was just a facade, while the 'struggle' was the reality." Zia, he said, "acted as a referee between us. He understood that Geneva made sense even if it did not succeed. Of course, he shared Akhtar's goal of a *mujahideen* government, but his attitude wasn't as extreme."

Yaqub clashed with Casey during one of his visits when he expressed the view that Moscow would withdraw its forces under a compromise "sensitive to its interests." Casey, Yaqub said, "brusquely" disagreed.

During an Islamabad dinner in honor of Shultz on July 3, 1983, Akhtar announced that "we believe the Soviets will never go." Howard Schaffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, who was accompanying Shultz, turned to Zia and said, "Mr. President, do you support that view?" Zia replied that "it would be a miracle if they depart." "Obviously," said Yaqub, who was present, "I didn't agree. After all, if that was our attitude, Geneva was only a sideshow, wasn't it?"[52]

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5

FROM BREAKTHROUGH TO BREAKDOWN

Diego Cordovez

- *A last talk with an ailing Brezhnev*
- *The preliminary draft outline of the settlement*
- *Tensions between Pakistan and the Mujahideen*
- *A second round of shuttle diplomacy (January 1983)*
- *The Kabul leadership starts to create problems*
- *My talks with Ambassador Spiers and Lawrence Eagleburger*
- *A tantalizing talk with an evidently ill Andropov*
- *Geneva Two (April and June 1983)*
- *Gavrilov dies and a rough beginning with Safronchuk*
- *First (failed) attempts to consult the Mujahideen*
- *A philosophical talk with a pessimistic Eagleburger*
- *Andropov dies and I receive a visitor*

I

On October 11, 1982, one month before Brezhnev's death, the *New York Times* published an OP-ED article by William Safire entitled "Inside Andropov's Mind," which reflected an upsurge in Western interest in the Geneva negotiations. "The struggle for succession in Moscow is on and I, Yuri Andropov, represent the policy line that will win," he was supposed to be thinking. Chernenko, in Andropov's mind, advocated the statuo quo: "continued failure of the

economy, adventurism in Afghanistan, losses to the Israelis in the Mideast, helpless pleading with the Chinese and inability to entice the Americans into détente and SALT." Victor Grishin, another front-runner in the maneuvering to succeed Brezhnev, "wants to bring about a Bay of Pigs in reverse—a superpower confrontation in Iran or Yugoslavia which, if a weak American President succeeds Reagan, might tip the scales permanently." "Although I headed the KGB for fifteen years, . . ." Andropov was supposed to conclude, "my image is pleasing to the West. . . . The specific issue upon which I ascend to power is this: The only way to achieve the fruits of détente without having to give one iota of freedom to Eastern Europe is to arrange an accommodation in Afghanistan." Andropov's "thinking" was supposed to continue as follows:

> That is why I have proposed to the Central Committee that we cut our losses and seek a settlement. Recently we have had our Afghan puppet tell the Pakistanis, through a U.N. intermediary, that Soviet troops would be removed if we could be guaranteed the continuance of our present Afghan regime. Same as the Americans wanted in Vietnam.

Although the message that the Soviets were supposed to have sent to the Pakistanis was just a product of Mr. Safire's fantasy, the article exemplified the belief of many Western analysts that the Soviets were exploring the possibilities of putting an end to the Afghan quagmire in honorable terms.

The U.N.'s mediation efforts seemed consequently to have acquired an unprecedented high profile. "It is the only game in town," a British diplomat told me when an avalanche of people came to see me over a period of several weeks following my return from Geneva. I even received an unusual invitation to lunch at the State Department with Deputy Secretary Walter Stoessel and other senior officials. Yaqub had told them that "the overall Soviet attitude had been encouraging" and had left the impression that a settlement was possible. I essentially took the position that was subsequently set out in the Secretary General's report to the General Assembly: that some "tentative progress" had been made but that, certainly, "the most critical stage of the diplomatic process" lay ahead.[1]

When Pérez de Cuéllar and I visited Moscow in September, Gromyko, in particular, seemed to think that trusting the Pakistanis was a great risk. He said that Pakistan would have to show real determination if it expected the Soviets to take concrete steps toward a settlement. Georgiy Kornienko, the influential First Deputy Foreign Minister, told me that for the United States it was "very convenient" to prolong the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan; it was therefore unrealistic to expect from Washington a constructive attitude toward the negotiations. Others felt, however, that if the Soviet Union pressed for a settlement it would force the United States to adopt a more positive stance.

Brezhnev himself raised the subject of Afghanistan and said that the Geneva talks "had been a good beginning . . . which merits a positive appraisal." Brezhnev was a dying man, reading from a prepared statement, and one had the impression that it was indeed necessary to await for a new leader to promote in the Kremlin the kind of decisions that the Geneva process required. Brezhnev died two months later, on November 11, 1982.

Brezhnev's funeral provided the first indications that perhaps William Safire's article had not been, in its essentials, too far off. In contrast to Andropov's forty-minute private meetings with President Zia, and a very few other heads of government and with Vice President George Bush, Babrak Karmal, according to Edward Mortimer of the *Times* of London, "received the cold shoulder treatment."[2] There were insistent and increasingly frequent Soviet "hints" about withdrawal and about a possible breakthrough in the Geneva negotiations. A British diplomat told me that Vladimir Kuzichkin, a Soviet defector, had told British officials that Brezhnev had overruled repeated advice from Andropov warning against the invasion. Western Europeans governments would be watching particularly closely to see if there would be a sincere Soviet effort to move the negotiations forward.

The U.N. General Assembly remained, however, impervious to whatever changes of perception were taking place. The Pakistani team conducted its usual campaign in support of that year's resolution. Shaharyar Khan, a charming, ebullient, and extremely astute undersecretary, apparently discovered that a Caribbean Ambassador was the owner and driver of a New York taxicab. He immediately issued instructions for the taxi to be leased on a permanent basis and parked outside the Assembly building with the "Off Duty" sign on until the voting on the resolution had been completed. Unfortunately, neither the cab nor its driver could be found.

Pakistan and its allies suffered that year a minor setback. A resolution, the text of which was identical to that adopted the previous year, was adopted by 114 votes to 21, with 13 abstentions (it had gotten 116 the previous year).[3] Shahnawaz swore that it would not happen again. Throughout the debate my efforts were supported by all governments regardless of the manner in which they had voted on the resolution. The fact that my mission was endorsed by a consensus of the international community was to prove extremely useful whenever the terms of the resolution became an issue in future negotiations. I myself could not help thinking that some very interesting, and perhaps instrumental, changes in the cast of characters had taken place since the beginning of the diplomatic process.

II

Immediately after the first round of negotiations was concluded, my colleague Raymond Sommereyns had started to prepare a paper that I described as a "preliminary draft of the comprehensive settlement." Raymond is a brilliant jurist and an outstanding international official. His intellectual ability is apparent in everything he does, and his judgment is remarkably shrewd and accurate. Raymond was once described by a British friend of mine as "contained in expression" because he is a quiet man, and usually imperturbable, but he is very articulate when asked to unravel legal intricacies. Over the years Raymond and I became not only good friends but also an increasingly effective drafting team: He usually produced scholarship of the highest possible quality, and I added what

we jokingly called the "chuchoca," which is a spice used in Latin American cooking.

We used as a basis for the draft the guidelines approved by the two sides at Geneva, but we encountered a number of difficulties when we started to formulate specific provisions. Fortunately, I was able ask Yaqub and Dost a number of pertinent questions when they came to New York for the Assembly's debate on Afghanistan. I told Yaqub that he, a distinguished military officer, knew that the "immediate" withdrawal of more than one hundred thousand troops as prescribed by the resolution was unrealistic. After a brief silence he said: "As a matter of fact it is much more difficult to withdraw than to move forward for the purpose of occupation." He then proceeded to give me a very professional explanation of the requirements of withdrawal operations, the details of which I have thoroughly forgotten. I rushed to tell Raymond Sommereyns to introduce the word "gradual" in the draft.

The paper that we laboriously prepared was in our opinion quite "safe" in the sense that it contained all the points that my interlocutors were expected to demand. Like other "preliminary" drafts, it had a lot of blank spaces and dots in particularly sensitive sections. It contained a "single" text that, in addition to setting out the principles of the settlement, was divided into four sections. Section I dealt with the interrelationships between the withdrawal of troops and the measures to be taken to settle the other issues involved; Section II laid down the provisions on nonintervention and noninterference; Section III contained a declaration of guarantees to be made by then-unnamed governments; Section IV spelled out the arrangements for the return of the refugees. The draft provided that the settlement should be implemented "in an integrated manner" and envisaged the possibility of consultations or other monitoring arrangements to ensure prompt, faithful, and complete implementation.

Although I was fairly certain that the paper that we had prepared would fly, another source of concern emerged at that time. The press started to report that there was increasing tension between the Afghan refugees and the Pakistani authorities and people. The refugee population in Pakistan was then estimated to be around 3 million, and there had been violent clashes with Pakistanis that had forced the authorities to take increasingly strong police measures and to relocate several camps. The refugees complained of mistreatment and of delays in the distribution of food and monthly allowances. A high incidence of tuberculosis had been reported in refugee camps, clean water was scarce, and gastroenteritis was rife among the children. Pakistanis complained that the refugees had completely denuded several forests, that the more affluent had bought homes and commercial properties, that they were taking over local business, and that there was an increasing number of tribal disputes. There were allegations that the resistance leaders were beginning to involve themselves in Pakistani affairs and to criticize President Zia. Government officials had warned them to stay out of local politics.[4]

President Zia and other senior people had taken until then a fairly relaxed attitude concerning the participation of the resistance leaders in the negotiations. But the changed circumstances in Pakistan were bound to lead to increased

pressures for "consultations with the refugees" as a means of diffusing tensions. I told Yaqub in New York that Gavrilov had been strongly opposed to any kind of consultation and that both Kabul and Moscow had repeatedly rejected the notion that the resistance leaders represented the refugees.

It had been agreed at Geneva that I would visit the area for consultations on the draft toward the end of the year. I decided, however, to postpone my trip until the beginning of 1983 mainly because we did not have a complete text and because I felt that the atmosphere that prevailed while the General Assembly was in session was not conducive to a serene consideration of the draft. The Pakistanis and Afghans readily agreed, but I was pleased to find that the Soviets were much upset when informed of my decision. "Why lose time?" said Ambassador Troyanovsky. He calmed down when I told him that I intended to give his Government a copy of the text and that I expected to receive comments from Moscow before leaving New York. I felt that it would be futile to start any discussions in Islamabad and Kabul on a text that the Soviets could not accept. Vladimir Shustov looked solemn when towards the end of December he came to my office to receive the draft. I then took off to rest and to think in Florida before my next trip to the area.

III

While in Bal Harbor I learned that on December 31 the Soviet official press agency Tass had issued a statement that, according to the *New York Times,* appeared intended "to reassure the Soviet-backed Government of Afghanistan and to curb speculation in the West that the new Soviet leader, Yuri V. Andropov, might be preparing to accept a face-saving settlement."[5]

I was not altogether unhappy because I felt that too much optimism about Andropov's intentions could be damaging, particularly if it led to the adoption by Pakistan of a more rigid posture. In that sense the statement might prove healthy, as in fact it did. Three days later, on January 3, 1983, *Dawn* of Karachi published an editorial stressing that the Tass statement "should put an end to the speculation that the leadership in Moscow is inclined to modify its policy on South-West Asia." *Dawn* added that it would be unrealistic of Pakistan to expect a "dramatic shift."[6]

The Soviet statement reminded me once again that the Afghan issue was caught in the web of the then very tense and complex relations between the superpowers. Moscow had given me to understand in no uncertain terms that it was eager to move forward in the negotiations, but it could not afford to suggest or even insinuate publicly that it was interested in a settlement at any price or that the Kabul régime would be readily dropped to achieve an accord.

I was to face many similar situations throughout the negotiations, when the Soviets were implying (rarely saying) one thing to me while taking an entirely different position in public or in discussions with U.S. diplomats. That seriously complicated my job as a mediator, and my credibility suffered, because both the Pakistanis and the Americans were not always able to confirm my impressions

about Soviet attitudes. Needless to say, I had identical problems with the Soviets whenever I told them that the Pakistanis or the Americans had taken a constructive stand on a given issue. With time I became used to the unsavory aspects of a mediator's work.

On January 6 in the evening I returned to New York. Shustov told me that he had instructions "from a very high level"—he emphasized these words—to inform me that the fact that I had sent the draft to Moscow had been much appreciated and that the Soviet Government wished me success in my forthcoming discussions with my interlocutors. There was no way to get him to say more, except for a "personal" remark to the effect that I should be very satisfied with the message that he had just delivered. Indeed I was, but I would have liked to know a bit more. Charles Dunbar, the American Chargé d'Affaires in Kabul, also came by. Skeptical as always, he said that he would like to see if "the Russians were willing to negotiate the withdrawal of their troops." I did not tell him that so far they had not rejected the relevant paragraphs of my paper. Ambassador Ling Qing of China admitted that Andropov could perhaps surprise everybody.

Before leaving I had to attend a meeting in Managua of representatives of the nonaligned nations; Managua was still living the euphoria of the Sandinista revolution. When I came back I had only one or two days in New York to prepare for the trip. I had invited my wife, María Teresa, to accompany me because I knew that she would help me establish a more informal relationship with my interlocutors. She traveled on a commercial airline directly to Islamabad while I visited Iran.

Captain Freund made a characteristic smooth landing at Teheran airport on Friday, January 21. The Iranians had made some negative remarks during the first round of negotiations, but they were, in fact, increasingly interested in my mission. One of them told me at some point that they were more interested in a settlement than Pakistan. I also knew that they were quite unhappy with the presence of a growing number of Afghan refugees.

Upon his return from Damascus I met with Foreign Minister Velayati. He had been briefed about the draft by his advisers and essentially stressed that the central issue was the Soviet withdrawal, which could be gradual "but not too long, certainly not more than two years." He made clear that the U.N. should ensure that all the Afghan refugees would go back to their home country. I softly pointed out that the voluntary character of the return of refugees was a United Nations principle that had been incorporated in the draft. It was on the whole a pleasant meeting, and if I had any doubts about Iran's willingness to be kept informed, they were dispelled when on the way out Velayati asked me to return to Teheran after my discussions in Islamabad and Kabul. He had arranged for me and my staff assistants to see the Shah's crown jewels, which are kept with care and even reverence under the custody of the Central Bank. I found them stunning and resplendent. I then proceeded to the airport and on to Islamabad.

IV

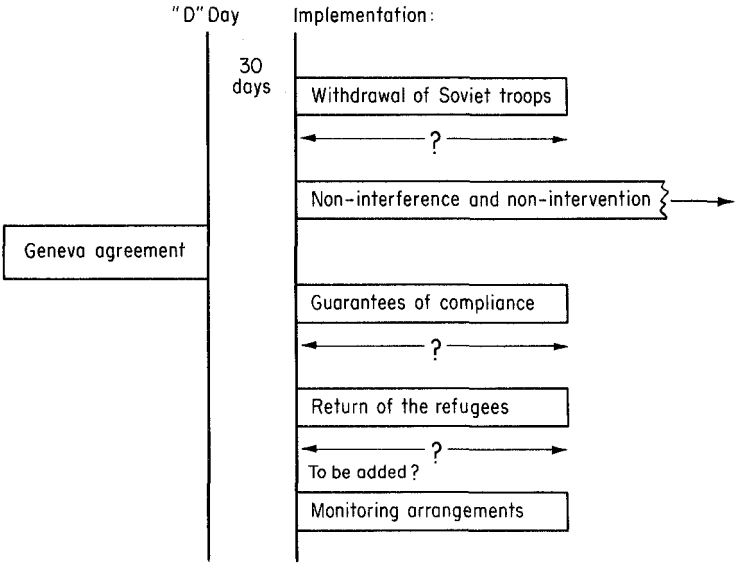
There was an air of high expectation when I met the press in Islamabad that Sunday, January 23, 1983. I tried to be as guarded as possible: "I am a compulsive optimist," I said when a correspondent reminded me of a phrase that I had used on my first trip, "but not a magician." Without discussing any substantive matters, an attitude that I consistently adopted and that helped me gain the confidence of all concerned, I pointed out that we had reached a stage when the political will of my interlocutors would determine the degree of progress to be achieved in the negotiations. When asked if I thought that Andropov was ready to reach a settlement, I answered that it was President Zia, not me, who had met Andropov in Moscow.

My first meeting with Yaqub was excellent. I was carrying, in addition to the draft settlement, a rather fancy chart that I had asked the Presentation Unit of the U.N. to prepare. It showed, with different colors and sliding parts, the way in which the settlement would be implemented. It had a vertical line—"D-Day"—representing the date on which the settlement would be concluded and four separate horizontal sliding pieces on which was written "withdrawal," "noninterference," "guarantees;" and "refugees" and that could be placed at any distance from "D-Day." The left side of each piece was supposed to indicate the date on which implementation of that particular element of the settlement would start, and the right side was supposed to indicate the deadline for conclusion. The right side of the piece on noninterference had been cut in such a way as to indicate that it would have indefinite application.

I told Yaqub that it would be necessary to reach an agreement on the distance between "D-Day" and each of the sliding pieces and thus define the interrelationships between the four elements of the settlement. I pointed out that during the period between "D-Day" and the beginning of the implementation of each of its elements, the parties would have to adopt the steps required to comply with the relevant obligations. With respect to noninterference, that time period was the period during which all interference activities would have to stop. That provision was intended to meet the concerns that Gavrilov had expressed at Geneva. Yaqub thought for a moment and then said that it was "like four trains leaving from a station." I left the chart in his office so that he could play with it.

A few minutes later I faced the whole Pakistani delegation in a plenary session. I said that it was essential to reach an understanding on the contents of the expanded draft that I would submit to the next Geneva session. In connection with the refugees, I said that the prospects for achieving an agreement with the Soviets and the Afghans depended upon Pakistan's willingness to make a distinction between the *mujahideen* leaders and the bona fide refugees. I then left so that Yaqub and his advisers could read the paper.

When we met again in private, Yaqub told me that the draft did not present "insurmountable" problems. His delegation would ask some questions and would make a few remarks. He did emphasize that his Government would strongly insist on the need for a clearly stipulated time frame for the withdrawal of troops. I readily agreed and pointed out that both the draft and the chart were



"The Chart" after Diego Cordovez's trip to Islamabad and Kabul in January/February 1983.

very clear on that issue. Referring to the chart, which I had officially baptized "the policy mechanism," we agreed that the only politically viable solution required that the implementation of all the elements of the settlement start simultaneously. I then suggested that this could take place thirty or sixty days after the conclusion of the settlement. Yaqub said he would have to consult the President. He pointed out that Pakistan would not be able to hold direct talks with the Afghans and that the chances of moving ahead would depend upon my capacity to persuade Kabul to continue the negotiations through proximity talks. He told me that he had been able to convince the Americans to accept that procedure but that anything that might imply recognition of the Kabul regime would create very serious problems that would hurt the substance of the negotiations.

That same evening I had a meeting with President Zia. He had asked that I go alone, but I insisted that Yaqub should also be present. After a few minutes of light conversation we were joined by Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the Minister of Finance and a powerful member of the Government who was later to succeed Zia as President, and General Arif, the army Chief of Staff. A most unexpected discussion ensued. It was as if Zia had staged a scenario in which I would be questioned about the prospects of reaching a solid settlement. Zia first sat back and listened, but he subsequently started to participate in this sort of tribunal, usually to support what I was saying. He kept repeating that he had told Andropov that there was no alternative to a political solution and that the United Nations was the only effective instrument to a solution.

The questioning basically centered on Pakistanis' skepticism about Soviet willingness to withdraw and to change the Kabul regime. I said that the process,

particularly the drafting process, was organized in such a way that Pakistan would be able constantly to ascertain the degree to which the Soviets would be willing to commit themselves. I also said that Pakistan would not have to change anything on the ground before the Soviets had formally accepted to withdraw within a time frame that was to be stipulated in the settlement. I told them that I was convinced that the Soviets would start promoting national reconciliation if there was progress in the negotiations. "They do not love Karmal, I assure you," I said.

Yaqub kept quiet throughout the "trial" but smiled when the following morning I told him that the President had thrown me "into the lions' den." He apparently repeated to Zia what I had said and told me later that Zia had laughed and asked him to tell me that I had "behaved like a good Christian." My Pakistani friends told me that the talk in Islamabad was that since his meeting with Andropov, Zia had embraced "the Cordovez card."

The Government had organized a most interesting sightseeing program for María Teresa as well as a number of social receptions—even a "musical" evening when we all wore Pakistani costumes. They were all very relaxed and pleasant. The same evening that Zia subjected me to questioning by his Cassandras he offered a dinner in my honor and, simultaneously, in accordance with Islamic tradition, Begum Zia Ul-Haq offered another in honor of my wife.

The following day Yaqub informed me that Pakistan accepted "simultaneity" and that implementation of all the elements of the settlement should start thirty days after its entry into force. His advisers made a number of comments that I did not, at that time, consider problematic. Little did I know. One of the comments, for instance, was that the settlement should include terminology "that would set out unequivocally acceptance of the present frontiers," an obvious reference to the "border issue." At that stage, however, I did not wish to start any arguments. I felt that during three days of talks in Islamabad I had raised enough questions on all the relevant issues and accordingly decided to proceed to Kabul.

Dost was fascinated with the chart. As far as he was concerned there was no need for anything else. But when he finished reading the draft settlement he pointed out that the idea of a single document consisting of four sections was "unrealistic." He felt that there should be one document dealing with noninterference, the return of the refugees, and "the development of good neighborly relations," a second document containing a multilateral agreement on guarantees, and a third one containing an agreement between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union on withdrawal of troops, as well as a declaration of guarantees by the Soviet Union. Dost made only a proforma statement about the need for direct talks. Obviously the Soviets had worked on that since I told them in New York that Pakistan was adamant on the issue.

What worried me most was that Dost refused to accept the concept of a time frame for the withdrawal of troops, regardless of the type and the number of documents that might be concluded. We were to have a number of very tense discussions on that question after I told him that the whole negotiation could come to a halt if an understanding on the subject were not reached before my

return to New York. Dost took the position that it was "impossible" for his Government to negotiate with Pakistan on the completion date for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. What difference would it make to Pakistan, he asked, if the settlement were to provide that the withdrawal would take place within, for instance, one and one half years? "A lot of difference," I retorted, "not only to Pakistan but to the whole world."

When I met Karmal he had been informed that I was pressing for a decision on the inclusion of a time frame in the settlement. "To be in a hurry is not the way of God," he told me at the outset of our meeting. Karmal argued that the withdrawal of troops would be an "historic decision" by Afghanistan and the Soviet Union that could not be the subject of negotiations with Pakistan. I told him that I was afraid that there was no way of convincing Pakistan to return to Geneva if he did not change his position. He ended the meeting by saying that I should continue my talks with Dost and then invited me, for the first time, to lunch at the palace. We thus walked together to a large, sumptuous, wood-paneled dining room that reminded me of the consistory chambers of Spanish and Latin American convents. It was pleasant, but I felt frustrated.

The Afghans had obviously observed the social program organized in Pakistan for María Teresa and me and had planned something similar. The following day Dost and his wife offered a dinner followed by dancing, in which only the men participated in accordance with Afghan tradition. Dost was by far the best dancer, and he seemed thoroughly to enjoy the time in which he was not required to discuss the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Our discussions continued to be tense the next morning, to such an extent that from time to time Dost became very emotional. He accepted the principle of simultaneity and agreed that implementation of all the elements of the settlement would commence thirty days after its conclusion, but every time we resumed the discussion on the time frame for withdrawal we had a heated confrontation. At one point he conceded that the settlement could prescribe a date for the commencement of the withdrawal and that "there would be an end of the withdrawal," but he refused to go any further. At times he sounded like a man discussing the date of his execution.

In the circumstances I decided to propose the inclusion in the Note for the Record of a sentence as follows: "The comprehensive settlement will in due course indicate a date for the completion of the withdrawal." I stressed that it constituted the "bottom line" and then contacted Gavrilov, something we had agreed that I should not do while in Kabul. Gavrilov took some time before returning my call, and then still more time before he came to see me at the guest house where I always stayed in Kabul. It was a large and comfortable residence that had been built for one of the King's sons.

We had a long meeting. During a lunch at the Soviet Embassy with Gavrilov and the Soviet Ambassador, a dour, rather unpleasant, party man, I had already pointed out that at Geneva it had been clearly understood that the withdrawal would take place within an agreed deadline. I told Gavrilov that I realized how sensitive the problem was for the Soviets but that it was equally serious for the Pakistanis and the Americans. Using essentially juridical arguments he said that

the Soviet Union could not accept that an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan would prescribe the date on which Soviet troops should conclude a military withdrawal. I told him that as a lawyer I did not see the difference between a provision—which they were prepared to accept—that would prescribe the date when the withdrawal should commence and one that would establish a deadline for its conclusion. Gavrilov was adamant at first but then told me that he would consult Moscow.

I was irritated and worried. I was supposed to return to Islamabad the following day, but I did not even know if I was going to meet Dost again before my departure. I had dinner at the residence with two representatives of U.N. agencies. Suddenly the telephone rang, and the protocol officer who was always with me said that the Foreign Minister wanted to see me in his office. There was a curfew, but I was escorted by two security cars.

Dost looked tired and strained. He said that he had consulted "the leadership" of the Government and of the party and that he was prepared to accept my proposal with a "small" change: instead of saying "the date for the completion of the withdrawal," it should refer to the "possible" date for the completion. I immediately rejected the idea, arguing that there was no difference between his formulation and the absence of a formal commitment. I was prepared, however, in order to help him, to suggest to the Pakistanis the inclusion in the settlement of an additional provision that would allow an extension of the deadline for withdrawal of, perhaps, thirty days, but only if he accepted the language that I had proposed. (He had argued earlier that it was not possible to accept a completion date because "technical" reasons might force the withdrawal to continue "a few days" beyond the deadline.) We then had a long exchange about the possible terms of the extension provision, at the end of which I said that I presumed that he accepted the sentence that I had proposed. He nodded, and I took my leave.

When I returned to Islamabad I had a long and interesting meeting with Ronald Spiers, the U.S. Ambassador. I stressed that there were concrete indications of Andropov's interest in a negotiated settlement. I said that in my view his Government should do something to change the prevailing impression that the United States was not supporting a political solution. Without accepting the premise of my statement he did agree that it was necessary for Washington to take a more cooperative stand and he frankly admitted that Kabul and the Soviets had made important concessions. Spiers told me that he was going to suggest the establishment of a regular working relationship between myself and senior officials at the State Department.

When I reported to Yaqub on my talks in Kabul, he did not easily conceal his satisfaction. It was one of the occasions when the Foreign Minister frustrated his advisers' efforts to press for still further concessions from the other side. They evidently felt that my sentence concerning the completion date for withdrawal was too weak and that the extension provision (Yaqub called it "the margin") was dangerous. Yaqub himself was much more interested in knowing what was behind Soviet and Afghan opposition to the idea of a single document. I told him in private that obviously the intention was to add legal force to the obligations on noninterference and to weaken the status of the provisions on withdrawal but

that, at that stage, he and I should stick to the position that the form of the settlement should be discussed at a later stage. I kept repeating that "form should follow function." I would accordingly prepare once again a "single text" for the next Geneva session.

There was no problem when we discussed the draft of the Note for the Record, except in connection with the consultative mechanism with the refugees. We even had a long brainstorming session in which a number of options were considered. The Pakistanis finally agreed most reluctantly that the resistance leaders would not act as representatives of the refugee population but they stressed that this should not be explicitly stated in the Note for the Record. I undertook to submit proposals at Geneva, in consultation with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, for the adoption of a consultative mechanism designed to ascertain the refugees' views on the proposed settlement, as well as provisions "to ensure the absence of impediments to their return," as requested by Kabul. On that basis I had a draft Note for the Record, acceptable to Pakistan which I then took to Kabul. Before leaving I received a very warm message of support from President Zia.

In Kabul I was particularly eager to repair my personal relationship with Dost, which I felt had been damaged as a result of the confrontations about the time frame for withdrawal. He frankly admitted that he had many problems with "the leadership," some members of which did not understand the requirements of diplomacy. He did not create any difficulties when we discussed the Note for the Record, and I therefore left Afghanistan feeling that I had accomplished all the objectives that I had set for myself during my trip, and indeed more.

In Teheran a number of constructive comments were made on the results of my talks in Islamabad and Kabul, but no assurances were given concerning the possibilities of Iran's more active participation in the negotiations. I felt, however, that during my trip the process toward a political solution had gained credibility in Teheran. On Tuesday, February 8, a very tired but fully satisfied mediator boarded the plane for the flight back.

There were a number of reasons to be satisfied. The preliminary draft had been accepted as a "good basis" for the formulation of a complete text of the settlement. Raymond Sommereyns and I had a much clearer understanding of the safe and dangerous zones of the drafting exercise that was to start at Geneva Two. The fact that the chart had enabled an agreement to be reached on the "policy mechanism" that was supposed to be articulated in the settlement constituted a significant step forward and we had also forced the Soviets and Kabul to accept that a time frame for the withdrawal of troops would have to be negotiated and agreed to. We had a tenuous agreement on a "consultative mechanism" that would, we hoped, help Yaqub face continuing pressures at home. We had also been able to overcome the procedural difficulties encountered at the beginning of the process; the next round of negotiations, which was to be held in April, would accordingly concentrate exclusively on substantive issues.

There was one other understanding, reached at my request, that was to prove extremely valuable throughout the negotiations. Indeed, it was formally agreed that not only the draft settlement but any other text that might be

required, such as amendments or additions to the draft, would be prepared exclusively by me—not by any of my interlocutors. I never allowed any departure from this rule because I felt that, given the animosity and the distrust that obtained between them, the existence of texts prepared by the parties themselves would only complicate the resolution of problems. Except for a few occasional attempts by the various participants to submit written "comments" and "observations," we never had any serious difficulties.

V

After I returned to New York and recuperated, I went back to the office and told the German Ambassador, Gunther van Well, who was then the chairman of the European Community, that instead of briefing all the Ambassadors separately he should arrange a multilateral meeting. It was the first meeting of its kind and the beginning of an institutional working relationship with the Community that was to prove extremely helpful throughout the negotiations. I had to brief several other Ambassadors, including, of course, the Indian Ambassador, who was always eager to know what was happening. I spoke to everybody in very general terms because I knew that my discretion was highly appreciated by my interlocutors, particularly the Soviets. I did send a fairly detailed written brief to the Chinese Government because I felt that it could play an important role if Pakistan encountered serious difficulties with the Americans or with the Soviets.

My first meeting with the Community was not very pleasant. Most of the Ambassadors were very polite, but I could sense how very skeptical they were. I was evidently not aware of the depth of their feelings against the Soviet Union as a result of what had happened in Eastern Europe after World War II. A European friend told me that it was impossible for them to trust a Government that had so ruthlessly imposed Communist regimes and violated human rights. My assurances that Andropov seemed determined to explore the possibilities of a negotiated settlement therefore fell on deaf ears. The French Ambassador, Luc de la Barre de Nanteuil, accused me of facilitating a plot by the Soviet Union to secure a totally docile Communist regime in Kabul and to reassert the dogma that a Socialist revolution is irreversible. His rudeness surprised me because his Government had been rather critical of the strong reaction of President Carter to the invasion. I told him that Pakistan should not be used as a pawn and that, if Pakistan was interested in a political solution, as Zia had repeatedly told me it was, the United Nations, and all its members, ought to support a diplomatic process designed to end the crisis.

On February 20 the *New York Times* published an article titled "UN Given Consent to Meet Afghan Refugees," which, ironically, suggested that what I had considered a tenuous, "window-dressing" understanding on the consultations with the refugees was the main result of my trip. It also reported that diplomats at the U.N. had stated that the consultations "would hopefully open the way for political discussions between Moscow and the insurgent chiefs." I knew that the Pakistanis would be pleased and that the Afghans would be furious.

Assistant Secretary Nicholas Veliotes invited a number of State Department officials to have lunch with me at the Four Seasons restaurant in Washington on February 22. I was told that I would subsequently meet Lawrence Eagleburger, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs. That was obviously what Ambassador Spiers had suggested. As I entered Eagleburger's office he greeted me very cordially and made a few remarks that showed his sense of humor. I always feel more comfortable in such company.

Eagleburger and Veliotes listened intently as I explained the way in which the process had been started. Yaqub and I had agreed that he would give the Americans the text of the draft settlement and I was conscious of the need to avoid any inconsistencies between what Yaqub and I said. But at the same time I felt that I should say certain things that the Pakistanis, for their own reasons, might report differently. We were to have a few difficulties on that score in the future.

In response to some joking questions from Eagleburger, I had to repeat a couple of times that I was not negotiating the new government of Afghanistan but rather "the establishment of the conditions that would allow the Afghans to exercise their right of self-determination." He repeatedly stressed that the withdrawal of troops constituted the overriding concern of the U.S. Government and that the replacement of the regime in Kabul would be more or less automatic if the Soviets did withdraw. I noted that I assumed that if the negotiations proceeded in a satisfactory manner the Soviets themselves would promote a change of government. The United States and Pakistan should be prepared to accept, however, that because of its geographical location any government in Kabul would be friendly to the Soviet Union. That had been the traditional attitude of all Afghan governments, even during the monarchy. Eagleburger seemed to agree but added that it would be difficult to accept an Iran-type Islamic regime. "Don't worry about that," I said. "The Soviets don't want it either."

When the formal discussion came to an end, Eagleburger assured me in a solemn tone that the United States Government sincerely supported my efforts. We then engaged in a more personal conversation during which he expressed particular interest in knowing if Andropov's apparent good intentions had any practical meaning in the discussions that I had been having with Gavrilov. Gavrilov had made some negative remarks to the press suggesting, for instance, that the withdrawal of troops would take five to ten years. "I just do not know why they say such things; you should know better," I said.

Eagleburger also asked if I had an idea how long the withdrawal might take. I replied that Yaqub had told me in a private conversation that as a military officer he considered four months to be the minimum time required for a complete withdrawal and that Dost had once mentioned eighteen months. "It therefore appears reasonable to me," I added, "that a compromise could be struck on a nine-to-ten-month withdrawal time frame."

I felt that my discussions with the European Community Ambassadors and with Eagleburger had broadened the negotiation process. I was already aware that there were deep divisions in Islamabad, Kabul, Moscow, and Washington,

as well as in the capitals of Western European countries, but I did not know how difficult the policy-making process within each of the governments might become. What was clear was that several parallel negotiations—all of which could have an impact on Geneva—were then starting.

VI

My next stop was Moscow. Pérez de Cuéllar had been invited to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union, and in the formal announcement of his trip it had been noted that I would accompany him. The intention was to stress that Afghanistan was on the agenda and that this had been accepted by the Soviets.

After the long trip from New York via Frankfurt, we were met at Moscow airport by Gromyko, Kornienko, Troyanovsky, and other senior people. We started to drink cognac in the VIP room of the airport almost immediately after landing, and I had a chance to exchange some words with Gromyko and with Kornienko. They obviously remained deeply suspicious of the Americans and the Pakistanis but seemed to feel, to the extent that one could detect any personal sentiments behind their poker faces, that there had been some tangible movement in the direction that they advocated.

In those days meetings with the Soviet leader consisted essentially of a statement by the visitor and another by the Soviet leader in which both tried to cover all the items that they had agreed in advance "to discuss." Pérez de Cuéllar accordingly read out the notes that had been prepared on various issues. On Afghanistan he basically said that Pakistan had agreed to conclude a "pact of good behavior" (we wanted to use expressions with the strongest possible impact after translation) and that the "pact" would probably be guaranteed by the United States and China. He added, because we wanted it on record in the Kremlin, that Afghanistan had formally agreed that there would be a gradual withdrawal of troops starting thirty days after the settlement entered into force and concluding within a deadline to be stipulated in the text of the settlement.

Andropov began his statement by stressing that "international affairs had taken a dangerous turn." After reviewing a number of "seats of conflict" he spoke about "the situation around Afghanistan." Andropov said that he categorically opposed any attempt to use the United Nations to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. That was obviously a warning in case anybody wanted to discuss at Geneva the question of the future government. He added that he had a "positive view" of the role that I had so far played in promoting a negotiated solution and repeated yet again that if interference was stopped "it would not be difficult to settle all other related issues, including the question of withdrawal of Soviet troops."

At that point Andropov put aside the notes that he had been reading and said, with considerable emphasis, that the Soviet Union had no intention of keeping its forces in Afghanistan. He added that if, however, interference did not stop, "Soviet troops would have to stay for as long as necessary because this is a

matter which concerns the security of the Soviet Union's southern border." He said that he did not understand why so many doubts had been expressed about the sincerity of the Soviet Union and then, counting off on his fingers, he asked what the purpose of keeping Soviet forces in Afghanistan could be since it involved (1) considerable expenses; (2) problems inside the Soviet Union; (3) problems with the United States, the Third World, and the Islamic world; (4) problems that would unavoidably arise with the other States involved. Speaking very slowly and emphasizing each word, he added that he sincerely wanted "to put an end to this situation."

Referring to accusations in "Western and Chinese circles" that the Soviet Union had never withdrawn from any country (I had been told the same thing in Iranian circles as well), Andropov said that there had been several historical examples that showed that the Soviet Union had withdrawn its forces when its "assistance" was no longer required. China, he noted sardonically, had presumably forgotten that the Soviet Union had come to its help (when China was attacked by Japan in Manchuria) and had subsequently withdrawn. Returning to his written statement, Andropov said that I should continue "prodding the Pakistanis to understand the real significance of a political solution."

As I flew back to New York, I felt reassured that all the speculation about this man's good intentions was not unjustified. Until then I had felt somewhat uncomfortable because I had been relying on the judgment and impressions of others. Obviously the Soviet leader had his own, probably extremely serious, internal problems, but the trip to Moscow had left no doubt in my mind that he himself felt that the invasion had been a mistake.

VII

In the meantime Raymond Sommereyns had been busy preparing a full text, in fact the first complete draft, of the settlement. We had a fairly clear idea of the kind of document that was needed and had also ascertained that two issues in particular created serious problems.

One was the border issue, about which we had noticed that both sides were extremely nervous, even emotional. The problem had started in 1893, when an agreement was signed on behalf of Afghanistan by King Amir Abdur Rahman Khan and on behalf of British India by Sir Mortimer Durand. Pakistan maintained that the Durand Line, which was defined in the agreement, had thus become the international border between the two countries. The Government of the United Kingdom had specifically confirmed that Pakistan was in international law the inheritor of the rights and duties of the old Government of India and of the British Government and that therefore the Durand Line was the international frontier Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan had, however, consistently taken the position that it had never accepted the Durand Line as the international border; it had always maintained that the 1893 agreement was not legally binding because Afghanistan had signed it under duress. Afghanistan considered that in any case the tribal territories between Afghanistan and the

administered areas of the British sphere formed independent territories. Afghanistan had voted against Pakistan's admission into the U.N. in 1947.

Although Pakistan had always maintained that since the Durand Line agreement there was no border dispute with Afghanistan, it quietly expected to extract from Afghanistan a formal recognition of the Line as the international frontier between the two countries. Dost told me that, as indicated in the "August proposals," the question could indeed be the subject of negotiations—but directly between the two Governments and only after the conclusion of the settlement.

By definition, an agreement on noninterference requires an understanding on a line—Yaqub had rightly said that "you cannot play tennis without a net"—and I had assumed, wrongly as it turned out, that a reference to the principle of the inviolability of borders would serve the purposes of the settlement without affecting the positions of my interlocutors regarding the border issue. My suggestion had been readily rejected at Geneva.

Subsequently, in the preliminary draft of the settlement, Raymond and I had included a provision on the obligation "to refrain from the threat or use of force in any form whatsoever to violate the 'international boundaries' of a neighboring State." Both sides rejected this statement. Dost told me that, if included in the settlement, that text would be used by Pakistan to bolster its claim that Afghanistan had accepted the Durand Line. Yaqub demanded that the settlement refer to the "existing internationally recognized boundaries"—the language that both governments had accepted in a U.N. resolution on the inadmissibility of intervention and interference in the internal affairs of states. Yaqub was under considerable pressure because many people in Pakistan undoubtedly felt that even a defective settlement would be justified if it included Kabul's recognition of the Durand Line.

The other problem area concerned the guarantees which had been suggested by Afghanistan in its famous proposals. None of us—not even, I think, the Afghans—had a clear notion of what was intended. I had the impression that Kabul basically expected a written commitment from the United States and other governments that they would not interfere in Afghanistan and that they would prevent Pakistan from doing so. What was clear was that Afghanistan intended the guarantees to cover only the provisions on nonintervention and noninterference. It was so agreed in the Note for the Record of the first Geneva session in June 1982. But Yaqub subsequently wrote to say that that was not the case and that Pakistan preferred a more general formulation covering all the provisions of the settlement.

Apparently the United States felt strongly that the withdrawal of Soviet forces should in some way be guaranteed. On the basis of a text that Raymond found, of a 1962 Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, we formulated what we considered a clever text that we expected would satisfy the concerns of both sides. If the United States and the Soviet Union, who were expected to be designated as guarantors—among, perhaps, others—accepted that text, the former would in practical terms undertake not to provide assistance for interference activities and the latter would undertake to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan.

We thus had a complete draft consisting, like the preliminary outline, of an introduction and four sections. It articulated the basic concept—or "policy mechanism"—of the settlement (the chart in legal terms!) and had draft provisions that would prescribe the dates on which the withdrawal would commence and conclude; the dates when the obligations on noninterference and on nonintervention, as well as the guarantees, would enter into force; and the date on which the return of the refugees would start. These constituted the interrelationships inherent in the package deal. The draft contained a very detailed set of provisions ("watertight," I called it) on noninterference and on refugees. We incorporated, of course, the understandings already reached, such as the "D-Day plus 30" simultaneity agreement on implementation. The draft had seventeen pages, and when I read the "final" version, I felt that it had been formulated as carefully, thoughtfully, and exactingly as is humanly possible. We were ready to go.

VIII

On the way to Geneva for the April round I was required to make a detour. A massive oil slick had begun to ooze in the Persian Gulf when high winds toppled a rig in Iran's Nowruz offshore oil field. The only way to cap the well, which threatened desalination and power plants, ports and fisheries, was to arrange a U.N.-supervised cease-fire in the war then raging between Iran and Iraq, but, having spent many hours in Kuwait arguing with Iranian and Iraqi ministers at the risk of delaying the Geneva negotiations, I concluded that no deal was possible.

The negotiations in Geneva had a difficult beginning. Both the Afghans and the Pakistanis told me that they needed more time to study the draft. I soon realized that the Afghans were unable to say anything because Gavrilov had not received instructions from Moscow, although I had sent the draft to the Soviets several days earlier. I was to learn more about the complexities of the Soviet bureaucracy later. The Pakistanis were ready, but they were waiting for the reaction of the Afghans and the Soviets.

After three days of very general discussions, Gavrilov obviously received his instructions and told me that Moscow was disappointed with the draft. After listening to him I concluded that there were essentially two reasons for the Soviets' dissatisfaction. The first was that I had prepared once again a single text. When I said that there was no way of doing otherwise in view of the understandings reached on the interrelationships, he developed the concept of a "mother document" that would set out the principles and the objectives of the settlement as well as the interrelationships (the chart), with appropriate legal linkages and cross-references to other, separate, documents. I suspected that the "mother document" would not have the same legal status as the "other" documents.

After a long talk in which I stressed that a discussion about the form of the settlement would at that stage be disruptive, I agreed to delete the word *section* from the headings of the document and to leave only the roman numerals.

Gavrilov seemed to think that we had thus eliminated the concept of a single text. In fact there would be five separate texts that could either be kept as a single document with roman numerals as headings or become five legal instruments.

The Soviets also objected to the paragraph prescribing that steps should be taken to give effect to the provisions on noninterference. It was far too weak, Gavrilov said. I admitted that it could be strengthened and promised to take into account the suggestions he made when I revised the draft.

The Pakistanis and the Afghans then gave me their comments and observations. They had examined the draft very carefully, and evidently there had been a competition within each delegation to find objections and to suggest amendments. In doing so, both sides took a number of contradictory positions. They both accused me, for instance, of departures from the U.N. resolutions that I had used as a basis for the text on noninterference, but at the same time they both proposed blatant departures from such resolutions if it was convenient to their specific interests. There was a wide range of observations, from substantive and fundamental to punctilious and prosaic.

I had several tense discussions with Dost when he attempted to go back on the understandings already reached, including, in particular, the one concerning the need to indicate in the settlement the date on which the withdrawal of troops would be completed. Yaqub said at one point that if Kabul were to renege on previous agreements "then the forward progression of these negotiations will be in serious jeopardy."

Raymond Sommereyns had started to prepare a revised draft from the first day. We used to discuss in the evening the changes that he suggested, and the submission of revised versions of the whole text became the established procedure to widen the areas of agreement. Dost gave me two texts of bilateral agreements, on noninterference and on refugees, which I first rejected as a violation of the understanding reached regarding drafting but which I eventually accepted as "written comments" after a tense exchange during which the papers were pushed back and forth several times. By the end of the first week, on April 15, we were ready with a revised draft.

A process of informal negotiations was taking place while the drafting exercise was being conducted. I told Gavrilov that Pakistan expected to go back to Islamabad with a time frame for the withdrawal of troops. He said that if Pakistan wanted the negotiations to move forward Yaqub would have to give him at the very least "a signal" of Pakistan's readiness to stop interference. He did not explain how the signal should be provided, and I preferred not to ask until I had conveyed the message to Yaqub. He was very interested and immediately started to discuss various possibilities. (Yaqub was usually bored during formal drafting sessions but loved informal negotiations.) During several (separate) meetings with him and Gavrilov, the elements of a possible agreement, designed "to give impetus to the process," started to take shape.

The essentials were that Pakistan would accept the text of all the provisions on noninterference (with, of course, the changes that were being introduced) and that it would agree to hold direct talks and to conclude a bilateral agreement on noninterference as part of a comprehensive settlement. The Soviets would

undertake to discuss a mutually acceptable time frame for the withdrawal of troops and to promote the removal of Karmal—which was the condition the Pakistanis had mentioned for their agreement to holding direct talks and to concluding a bilateral agreement.

My impression was that both Yaqub and Gavrilov realized that these were indeed the logical ingredients of a deal that would constitute a very real breakthrough in the negotiations but that both were extremely suspicious of each other's intentions. Mutual distrust ran very deep since the "Islamabad incident," and both, I think, were also rather unsure of the support of their respective governments. When, for instance, I discussed with Gavrilov the need to replace Karmal as the only way to obtain Pakistan's acceptance of direct talks, he seemed very doubtful that his Government could agree to do so. He said that at one point President Zia had rejected a suggestion to replace Karmal and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, the Prime Minister, as head of the government.

Yaqub had agreed that regardless of the outcome of these discussions I should try to convince Gavrilov that the most unequivocal signal that the Pakistanis could send to Moscow at that stage was their willingness to finalize the text on noninterference. Yaqub undertook to cooperate to that end in the negotiations when we started, on Monday, April 18, to consider the revised draft that I had prepared. As I had agreed with Gavrilov, I had introduced much stronger language regarding the steps to be taken by Pakistan to comply with the provisions on noninterference. The Pakistanis swallowed these changes because I had also included the language that they demanded concerning the borders—"the existing internationally recognized boundaries." (The argument that they had used—that it was the language adopted by the U.N.—made it very difficult for me not to include it in a text that was being negotiated under United Nations auspices.) They were unhappy with the new text concerning the "harboring in camps and bases, or otherwise organizing, training, financing, equipping and arming of individuals" that the Afghans had requested.

The Afghans were not unhappy with the new text on noninterference but took exception, in very strong terms, to the reference to the borders. Dost continued to question the text on the withdrawal of foreign troops. "Following the implementation of the provisions on noninterference," he said, "Afghanistan will inform the U.S.S.R. that it should withdraw its military contingents, and the Soviet Union will do so." I always felt that there was an element of schizophrenia in his behavior on that subject: on the one hand he talked as if the paragraph in question were unnecessary, but on the other he made suggestions, even editorial changes, that were entirely inconsistent with the position that he was taking on the substance of the issue itself.

Raymond and I had managed to find suitable solutions to most of the observations made during the first reading of the document, but there were still many problems and new ones were constantly emerging. Just as I thought that the provisions on noninterference were practically agreed upon, the Pakistanis proposed the addition of a paragraph about the "situations brought about by the threat or use of force or acts undertaken in contravention of the principle of noninterference or nonintervention." This suggestion was to create enormous

problems with the Afghans. During the second week of negotiations I produced yet another revised draft intended in the main to show Gavrilov that considerable progress had been made in connection with the noninterference provisions.

At that point the negotiations had become very intense. We were constantly moving from the drafting itself to the consultations on a possible deal on the core issues. The fact that priority was given to the provisions of the draft on noninterference created a certain degree of concern in the Pakistani delegation, which started to raise the question of "symmetry" in the drafting process, but Yaqub was willing to ignore the advice of his aides as long as an understanding with Gavrilov involving a Soviet disclosure of a withdrawal time frame was being considered.

To help Yaqub in that admittedly difficult situation, I promoted an active consideration of the "consultative mechanism" with the refugees. I prepared a paper that suggested that "before the conclusion of the negotiation process" a team of U.N. and UNHCR officials "under the aegis of the Personal Representative of the Secretary General" hold consultations with broad segments of the refugee population. The Pakistanis were generally pleased because the arrangements sounded political enough to enable them to claim that the refugees were being involved in the Geneva process. The understandings on the exclusion of the Peshawar leaders notwithstanding, Yaqub's advisers appeared confident at that stage that my text would work.

For these very reasons the Afghans were strongly opposed. They argued that the paper should not speak of "consultations"—as already agreed to in two Notes for the Record—but rather of "information"; that neither the U.N. nor the Personal Representative should be involved; and that the Government of Afghanistan's approval should be sought at each stage of the process.

By the middle of the third week I realized that my distinguished interlocutors were getting tired of the drafting exercise. When that happens in a negotiation there is a tendency to move in circles rather than forward.

Gavrilov was the first to say that he needed to go home and consult his superiors. He admitted that the provisions on noninterference were practically finished and that Pakistan had cooperated to that end. But something seemed to bother him; he seemed to feel that Moscow would not realize the significance of the signal. We agreed that perhaps we could set out in a Note for the Record an understanding between Yaqub and Dost concerning the cessation of interference and the time frame for the withdrawal of troops. I felt that such an understanding would have the additional advantage of forcing Dost once again to promise a time frame for withdrawal.

Yaqub agreed to consider my proposal. I prepared a draft of a Note for the Record that provided that after the resumption of the negotiations, Pakistan would indicate the date on which it would be ready to conclude the settlement and that, therefore, within thirty days of the settlement, it would implement the provisions on noninterference. (The language was esoteric, but all concerned knew what it meant.) Afghanistan would undertake, on the basis of an agreement between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, simultaneously to indicate the time frame for withdrawal in the draft text of the settlement. The icing on the

cake, that Pakistan and Afghanistan needed to calm down their respective constituencies, was added in the form of references to the consultations with the refugees and to the possibility of holding direct talks in due course.

At that point I decided to resume my Genevese version of shuttle diplomacy between Dost's hotel and Yaqub's office. Ironically, at that stage the only person that I was meeting at the Palais des Nations was Gavrilov, who was not one of my official interlocutors. Dost accepted the proposal, but on condition that the text concerning the border be changed in the draft of the settlement. Yaqub likewise accepted the basic terms of the understanding but adamantly opposed any change in connection with the border. Neither side moved, and the understanding was thwarted. Gavrilov told me that the border was the one question regarding which he was unable to influence the Afghans. "It is too sensitive for them," he said, "and I never talk about it." He pointed out, however, that the fact that Yaqub had been prepared to come back with a formal commitment to stop interference was significant.

At that point his words constituted enough compensation for all the strenuous efforts that I had made. On Friday, April 22, in the evening, I got a Note for the Record, without the paragraph containing the signals, approved by the two sides. They seemed quite happy when they said good-bye. I was just hoping that Yaqub and Gavrilov would return with the necessary authority to achieve the breakthrough that they both wanted.

IX

We all made optimistic statements to the press when the negotiations were suspended in April. The *Economist* of London asked if a settlement was being hatched, almost unnoticed, behind closed doors in Geneva. It then made a somewhat dramatic conjecture "emanating from Pakistan": Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, "the ambitious leader of Hezb-i-Islami, the most fundamentalist of the Afghan guerrilla groups, might join President Karmal in a coalition or might become prime minister." The article added that "the Russians may believe that a government to which Mr. Gulbuddin belongs would have the military strength to hold off the other Afghan guerrilla groups."[7]

This was not the first time that the possibility of such an alliance had been mentioned. A very well-informed source who had lived in Afghanistan for almost thirty years had told me, during a conversation we had in Kabul, that "if in the course of the negotiations it becomes clear that the Soviets are ready to withdraw you should not be surprised if Gulbuddin and Karmal become allies." The report in the *Economist* therefore rekindled my hopes that the suspension of the negotiations was intended by both sides to work out arrangements that would facilitate the conclusion of the deal under discussion at Geneva.

On my way back to New York, I stopped in Paris to brief Pérez de Cuéllar and in London for a meeting with Douglas Hurd, Minister of State in the Foreign Office. I always felt that the British had very good information and that they were influential within the European Community on matters pertaining to

Afghanistan. It was a sobering discussion. Hurd told me that it would be very dangerous to "demolish the pressure that had built up" in order to test Andropov's intentions because it would be impossible to rebuild such "machinery" (he meant the *mujahideen* organizations) if it turned out that Andropov was not serious. I told him that my problem was that the Soviets were equally suspicious of Western intentions; they did not believe that Pakistan would be allowed by the United States to stop interference even if it accepted a formal commitment to that effect.

Back in New York I held, on May 9, my first formal meeting on Afghanistan with Jeane Kirkpatrick. In the past I had met only with her subordinates at the permanent mission, and I was afraid that she was upset when I went to see Eagleburger in Washington. This time she had requested to be briefed on the negotiations, and I immediately invited her to my office. It was a very cordial meeting in which she openly admitted that considerable progress had been made. I felt, in fact, that her attitude was so constructive that I could express in very clear terms my impression that what was lacking was concrete and specific support of my efforts by the United States. When she asked me to suggest the manner in which such support could be expressed, I said that perhaps the President or the Secretary of State could send a letter to Andropov or to Gromyko containing a formal endorsement of the United Nations' efforts to achieve a political settlement through negotiations. She promised to pass on the suggestion to Washington, and we agreed to meet again shortly.

Two days later Larry Eagleburger came to see me in my office. He told me that Jeane Kirkpatrick had reported on our meeting and that he wanted to tell me that a draft of the letter to the Soviets was already under active consideration in Washington. Larry seemed particularly eager to clarify an article in the *New York Times* of May 4, according to which the U.S. had stepped up the quantity and quality of covert military support to the Afghan insurgents. The article, according to Eagleburger, was based almost entirely on Soviet sources. Eagleburger's concern was obviously prompted by reports from Islamabad that Pakistan was embarrassed by the *Times*'s article, which everybody assumed had been leaked by the Americans. "It either portends total American insensitivity," a diplomat was reported to have said in Islamabad, "or more Machiavellian motives. . . . It's long been recognized that there are voices within the American administration which have never supported the Geneva dialogue."[8] Eagleburger told me that Yaqub had decided to visit the capitals of the five permanent members of the Security Council to find out if those governments were willing to act as guarantors of the settlement.

I also briefed the European Community Ambassadors and had to endure the French Ambassador's antics. I remained optimistic, however, because I had the impression that although there was profound skepticism about Andropov's intentions, or about his capacity to impose a decision to withdraw, both sides realized that all drafting difficulties could be overcome with a bit of skill and imagination—in other words that the formulation of a settlement was not the real problem—and that the negotiations had proved crucial in identifying the tough political decisions that would be required to achieve a solution.

My conviction was reinforced when I was informed, on May 26, that the United States had indeed sent a letter, signed by Secretary of State Shultz, to the Soviet Union supporting my efforts. The letter used strong and direct terms, including a categorical expression of U.S. willingness to cooperate in the process if there was a real commitment on the part of the Soviet Union to reach a settlement.

That same day Yaqub came to New York. He had already been in Beijing, Paris, London, and Washington and had visited Saudi Arabia, then holding the chairmanship of the Islamic Conference. His impression was that there was deep skepticism about the negotiations. The United States, while strongly supporting a negotiated solution, had reserved its position on the guarantees pending a detailed examination of the contents and the implications of the final document. The Chinese had indicated that they could act as guarantors only after the withdrawal of troops had been completed and as part of an effort to establish a *cordon sanitaire* around Afghanistan to prevent a repetition of the crisis. Agreement on a short time frame for withdrawal had been identified as the key issue in all the capitals that he had visited.

In a subsequent conversation with Pérez de Cuéllar and me, just outside the Security Council chamber, Yaqub noted that all the governments that he had talked to had emphasized that a settlement could be achieved only if Karmal disappeared from the scene. That would enable the Soviets to withdraw without causing a bloodbath. Recalling that Zia had once told me in Islamabad that he would be willing to talk and to sign an agreement even with "a brother" of Babrak Karmal, Yaqub said that in his opinion "even a clone would do." He added that he was confident that he would secure Karmal's removal in Moscow, where he was scheduled to go a few days later. That evening ABC News had a program about Afghanistan that included a segment from Kabul in which Harvard professor Roger Fisher suggested that Karmal could indeed be replaced.

X

I flew to Geneva on June 13, three days in advance of the scheduled date for the resumption of the negotiations, because I wanted to have enough time to consult with an official of the UNHCR who had traveled to Pakistan to ascertain the technical feasibility of the scheme that we had been discussing. He told me that he had found that "the dynamics of peace" now prevailed in the refugee camps.

Yaqub and I had a tête-à-tête dinner at which he appeared rather satisfied with his talks in Moscow, about which he did not, however, provide any details. He and the Soviets had agreed, he said, "not to embarrass each other," and he also told me, en passant, that he had checked Gavrilov's assertion that the Soviets had proposed to replace Karmal with Keshtmand. Zia had assured him that such a proposal had never been made. He did not say if he had been able to get any indication of the position of the Soviet Union on the question of the withdrawal time frame. He seemed optimistic and eager to resume the talks.

The first meeting was held, at their request, with the Afghans, who made a very firm and formal request for direct talks. I felt that this was just another pro forma statement for the record, but I duly transmitted the request to the Pakistanis, who immediately rejected it. As we walked towards the door of the Palais, Dost said something disquieting: Gavrilov had suffered a heart attack and was probably not coming to Geneva. I rushed back to my office, and Cathy told me that she had just been informed by the Soviet Mission that Ambassador Vasily Safronchuk had arrived from Moscow and wanted to come to my office that same afternoon.

Safronchuk and I became good friends over the years, but our first encounters in Geneva were very tense. He was known in the U.N., where he had served as Deputy Permanent Representative, as an extremely tough speaker and a difficult negotiator. He had been subsequently sent to Afghanistan, almost a year before the invasion. When the Soviets troops entered the country Safronchuk went back to Moscow to head the department dealing with Afghanistan and Iran and was replaced in Kabul by Gavrilov. Later, when we became friends, I told him that I had read copies of the cables sent by the U.S. Embassy in Kabul—the Iranians had found thousand of documents in the Embassy in Teheran—and that I had the impression that he had desperately tried to prevent the invasion by persuading the Afghans to work out an internal political agreement. Safronchuk did not comment because he is a disciplined diplomat, but a mutual friend told me that, disgusted when the invasion took place, Safronchuk had requested a transfer to Moscow.

As soon as Safronchuk entered my office he handed me a hand written note from Gavrilov. "Dear Diego," it said, "A heart attack has forced me to miss this round of talks. I will need, as docs say, 2–3 months to recover. . . ." We talked briefly about our friend's sudden illness, and Safronchuk then asked me to explain the proposed settlement—he pretended to have only a very general idea—and my understanding of where the negotiations stood.

Safronchuk interrupted me several times and appeared to question a number of key points. He seemed to take the position that we should negotiate again certain issues. He noted, for instance, that the thirty day simultaneity provision was unrealistic because Pakistan would not be able to dismantle all its interference machinery within that period. I let pass a number of his remarks but at one point I had to tell him that these were questions that had been formally agreed upon and that reopening understandings that were recorded in writing would create enormous difficulties. I also said that the credibility of the Soviet Union could be seriously damaged. Safronchuk ignored my statement and continued to ask questions and to rebut most of my answers.

Needless to say, the atmosphere of the meeting was not one in which I could have inquired about the reaction in Moscow to the proposed deal that I had discussed with Yaqub and Gavrilov. I decided to end our conversation in as friendly a manner as possible. Safronchuk did not want to leave without stressing that what I needed to do at that stage was to talk to the Americans —he said they had thwarted the deal when Yaqub went to Washington.

After two or three days of private conversations with Safronchuk and Yaqub,

I concluded that a devastating incident had taken place in Moscow. Safronchuk even brought the minutes of the discussions between Yaqub and Gromyko to prove that Pakistan had "reneged" on the assurances to cease interference. At one point he angrily accused me of inventing the concept of a "signal"—the drafting of the noninterference provisions—that was meaningless. Safronchuk said that if there was any doubt about Yaqub's attitude in Moscow, the *International Herald Tribune* had just published an interview with Niaz Naik, the second-in-command in Pakistan's foreign office, in which he was reported to have stated that all questions were "still wide open."[9]

Safronchuk very firmly took the position that any discussion about the withdrawal of Soviet troops would have to await a very formal commitment by Pakistan concerning noninterference. Although we had a number of tense exchanges, particularly when he implied that I had been associated with attempts to mislead the Soviets, Safronchuk consistently and skillfully emphasized that Pakistan was the real culprit and that I, too, had been a victim of their devious manipulations. If occasionally he conceded that Pakistan had, perhaps, made a serious move towards a settlement, he asserted that the United States had frustrated such efforts when Yaqub went to Washington. The letter from Shultz to Gromyko had not been, therefore, well received.

Yaqub first appeared surprised when I told him what Safronchuk had said. He admitted that the Moscow discussions had been difficult, but he maintained that his position had been consistent with the understandings reached at Geneva. Yaqub maintained that what had probably caused a misunderstanding was that he had pointed out in Moscow that, in keeping with the package deal concept, the section of the settlement dealing with noninterference could not be considered final until all other sections of the settlement were ready. That, he added, was the underlying premise of Naik's statement to the IHT as well.

Safronchuk was furious when I told him what Yaqub had said. He retorted angrily that the Soviet Union had understood that Pakistan was ready to commit itself to stop interference and that Yaqub had clearly indicated in Moscow that it was not.

The atmosphere at the formal negotiations, as well as the positions of the parties, changed drastically. I was particularly disturbed when Pakistan adopted an entirely different and, in my view, negative attitude. I felt that Yaqub could have tried to rectify the impression that he had left in Moscow by moving adroitly as he had done before the suspension of the negotiations. But his enthusiasm was gone, and he started to make some rather long, somewhat philosophical, statements. "Quick and dramatic results should not be expected," he repeatedly stressed. Dost, on his part, refused adamantly to talk about the time frame for withdrawal and raised the question of Iran's full participation in the negotiations and in the settlement, without which Afghanistan would be unable to make any commitments.

Since the beginning of the negotiations I had been inviting the two delegations to dinner or lunch at various restaurants in Geneva, which offer excellent cuisine and wines. Cathy always chose the best places and superb menus, which I felt were not always appreciated. An Afghan delegate always pushed aside all

the delicacies and concentrated on the meat. (I was told that he would subsequently eat a whole pizza near his hotel!) These are occasions during a process of diplomatic negotiations when people are more relaxed and talk more openly and frankly about the issues under discussion. This kind of atmosphere was particularly important at that time, and when we had dinner at Le Bearn (with the Afghans) and at La Reserve (with the Pakistanis) I very actively tried to find out what was happening. My interlocutors had evidently encountered strong opposition from hard-liners in Islamabad and Kabul when they returned from the April negotiations. They were not inclined to give me any details. I gathered only that the Moscow incident threatened to derail the negotiations.

I decided that in the circumstances I should push for a continuation of the drafting process. Agreement on key provisions of the draft settlement would, I hoped, contribute to a restoration of a degree of mutual confidence, which at that point seemed to be virtually nonexistent, and enhance the credibility of the two foreign ministers in their respective capitals. I also hoped that wider agreement on specific texts would have a positive effect in Moscow and in Washington.

I issued a revised version of the draft settlement on June 17. I predictably received another long list of observations and comments, and the negotiators started a laborious discussion about words and commas. The Pakistanis were particularly obstreperous but did make a number of helpful suggestions. During the suspension of the negotiations they had obviously made a careful review of the whole draft in Islamabad. The Afghans brought a new draft of all the noninterference provisions; I again accepted these as "observations and comments" and then forced the Afghans to work on my text. I sometimes wonder how I mustered all the patience that I needed to discuss each and all the proposals and objections from the two sides.

Although the Pakistanis wanted me to continue the discussions on the consultative mechanism for the refugees, I took the position, in the light of their own change of attitude, that we should give priority to the draft settlement. When Yaqub mentioned that the Americans had again raised the question of the scope of the guarantees, arguing that they should cover the whole settlement and not only the noninterference provisions, I suggested that we should work on a new text. It took ages, with Safronchuk's help, to get Dost to accept the new version, which was not entirely satisfactory to the Pakistanis.

The possible guarantors were also discussed. Yaqub suggested that the five permanent members of the Security Council be asked. Dost conceived the guarantors as a group of friends who would ensure the faithful implementation of the settlement. Therefore, if all the governments proposed by Yaqub were to be selected, then Afghanistan would insist that India also be asked. The mere suggestion that India could be associated with the settlement irked the Pakistanis. Both sides conceded that only the United States and the Soviet Union were at that stage acceptable.

The Americans had also raised with Yaqub the need for a sophisticated monitoring procedure. I therefore suggested a text according to which the Personal Representative of the Secretary General, with the assistance "of such personnel as may be deemed necessary," would monitor the implementation of the

settlement and propose "specific measures designed to ensure the prompt, faithful, and complete observance of the provisions of the comprehensive settlement." The personal representative would also organize consultations with the parties and the guarantors for the purpose of dealing with alleged violations. The Soviets and the Afghans accepted the text most reluctantly, on the strict understanding that it essentially implied the continuation of my mission throughout the implementation process and that it did not involve the setting up of a U.N. peacekeeping operation. (Until then the Soviet Union had consistently been opposed, as a matter of principle, to the setting up of U.N. peacekeeping operations.) In the light of what they had said on the subject earlier, the Soviets and the Afghans made an important concession when the text was accepted "in principle."

We completed the text on noninterference, and I even thought that we had solved the border issue. In point of fact my understanding was that Dost had finally accepted the text demanded by the Pakistanis ("the existing internationally recognized boundaries") on condition that the Pakistanis withdraw the very offensive paragraph on the use of force, which Yaqub had agreed to do. This understanding was reflected in the revised version of the draft settlement that I issued on June 24, when the negotiations were adjourned. Dost, and subsequently his successor, Abdul Wakil, consistently maintained, however, until the very last day of the negotiations in April 1988, that such an understanding had not been reached. My records leave no doubt that it was indeed reached. It will be seen later that it took a major diplomatic operation involving President Gorbachev himself to untangle the misunderstanding.

We also completed the provisions containing the arrangements and conditions for the return of the refugees, which, as mentioned before, were essentially standard U.N. arrangements. We had some problems when the Pakistanis refused to accept the establishment of "mixed commissions" of Pakistani and Afghan authorities for the purpose of organizing, coordinating and supervising the return operations. Yaqub eventually accepted this point, against the advice of his aides, on the assumption that by the time such commissions were to be set up, Afghanistan would have a new government.

Forward movement, however painful, in the formulation of a draft settlement improved somewhat the atmosphere, as well as my personal relations with Safronchuk, but I remained very worried because we were not anywhere near the kind of deal on the core issues that had been discussed in April. Dost refused to discuss the time frame for withdrawal—we had several repeat performances of the emotional exchanges that had taken place in Kabul—and Yaqub appeared uninterested in several formulas that I suggested for sending new signals. At one point he told me that "the natural desire of a mediator to conclude a settlement should not exceed the desire of the parties themselves."

I even drafted a message that I asked Pérez de Cuéllar to send from New York to the two foreign ministers urging them to make a special effort and suggesting that the continuation of the negotiations might be questioned if there were no breakthrough. The message was entirely futile. Safronchuk kept repeating that Pakistan was not serious and that only an unequivocal expression of its

willingness to end the conflict, which would require an "authorization" from the United States, could move the process toward a settlement.

A number of desperate attempts, written and unwritten, to work out an "exchange of assurances" having failed, I decided that the negotiations should be adjourned. Safronchuk had by then become very helpful, but he was also deeply skeptical. Unlike Gavrilov, he was quite relaxed, repeatedly suggesting that I was too impatient and unaware that "these things take years."

I proposed that we should adopt a Note for the Record and used it to force my interlocutors to reaffirm certain basic understandings that once again seemed in danger of being forgotten. The Note stated that the negotiations had been devoted essentially to the elaboration of the draft settlement, the text of which, as it stood on June 24, was attached as an integral part of the Note. It was agreed in the Note that I would carry out preliminary consultations with the United States and the Soviet Union, "which have been so far identified as possible guarantors," on the revised text of the guarantees. That gave the press an impression of progress that was, of course, slightly misleading.

Flying back to New York over the Atlantic, I wrote some notes about the negotiations. As I read them now I find that I was not particularly frustrated or worried. I was, in the main, curious. I did not know what had happened during May, when the negotiations were suspended. There had been a major incident in Moscow, a full picture and account of which I did not have. My interlocutors had been severely criticized when the negotiations were suspended. In Pakistan hard-liners had insisted that the Soviets be forced to withdraw and that no concessions be made. In Kabul "many party members" had argued that Pakistan should be forced to end all interference activities and that the withdrawal should not be mentioned in the settlement. There was also opposition to the settlement in Washington and in Moscow. I subsequently heard that Andropov himself had fallen seriously ill in May and that he had never again regained control of his government.

What was the real problem? Was there a combination of factors that together had dramatically slowed down the process? Had I made a mistake when I allowed the negotiations to be suspended in April? Could I have kept them going? I asked myself many questions but did not have any answers—and I did not know what to do next.

XI

Yaqub was apparently forced for domestic reasons to paint a positive picture of the negotiations when he returned to Islamabad. Denying press reports of an "impasse" at Geneva, he stated that "steady progress towards a settlement" had, in fact, been made. An unidentified Pakistani official had earlier been quoted in a UPI dispatch from Geneva as describing the talks as being "at a standstill." Yaqub emphasized in support of his assertions that I was to travel to Washington and Moscow to discuss the text on guarantees and that I was also to travel to the area to continue the negotiations.[10]

Yaqub continued to sound positive when Secretary of State Shultz visited Pakistan in early July. After Zia and Yaqub briefed him on the negotiations, Shultz said that in his analysis it was worthwhile continuing the dialogue. "It seems that there is a sense of motion and the possibility of something concrete coming out of these talks," the Secretary said. He also said that the picture looked "good" for the approval by Congress of a new aid package and then proceeded to a refugee camp to tell the refugees that they were not alone. "Fellow fighters for freedom," he shouted, "we are with you." Commenting on Secretary Shultz's visit to Pakistan, the *New York Times* said in an editorial that in order to achieve a settlement "the Russians would have to begin by accepting a timetable for withdrawal." "A more forthright American response," added the *Times,* "might propel the diplomacy forward."[11]

Reading the reports from Pakistan and thinking of ways in which I myself could "propel the diplomacy," I concluded that I should try to help Yaqub. Geneva had indicated that he was facing opposition from certain political and military circles, but his subsequent statements demonstrated that the Pakistan Government was, at the same time, under increasingly strong pressure to reach a settlement. There was even talk of a civil conflict. Continuing tensions brought about by a growing Afghan refugee population added urgency to a consultative mechanism. It was essential to allow Yaqub to move toward a solution that could not be attacked as a betrayal of the Afghan refugees.

I thus decided personally to hold consultations with the High Commissioner for Refugees. The United States and some Western countries, the main financial contributors of the UNHCR, were obviously pressing him to maintain the position that the consultations should be undertaken only after an agreement had been reached. During our conversations in Geneva, on July 20 and 21, we agreed that the consultations would be conducted by a team comprising several officials of the UNHCR and a member of my office. We hoped that this would satisfy Pakistan and that we would be able to convince Afghanistan that, since I would not be participating personally, the consultation would be "essentially technical." We also worked out the procedures that would be followed by the team.

A few days after I returned from Geneva, on Friday, July 29, a friend at the U.S. Mission called me to say that Stanislav Gavrilov had died in Moscow. The report was subsequently confirmed, at my request, by the Soviet Mission. I was deeply saddened. Stan had worked with conviction, skill, and integrity, as well as courage, to promote a settlement.

Eagleburger's reaction, when I told him that Yaqub's trip to Moscow had been counterproductive, was one of utter surprise "because Yaqub is such and accomplished diplomat." In his opinion the slower pace of the negotiations was the result of increasing internal disorder and disagreement in the Soviet Union. What to do in Afghanistan had been the subject of tense debates within the Politburo in which Gromyko had taken a very rigid stand. The outcome depended on how firmly Andropov remained in control. I said that the Soviets had been telling me that the United States had destroyed all the possibilities of reaching a settlement when Yaqub visited Washington before his trip to Moscow.

Carefully choosing his words, Eagleburger then told me that the United States was not in favor of "bleeding" the Soviets in Afghanistan—"because in the long run the United States would also be a loser if the situation in Pakistan were to deteriorate"—but that in order to become associated with the settlement the United States demanded a very formal Soviet commitment to withdraw. Although the text of the settlement had been improved in many essential respects, it was not yet clear whether it was going to contain a credible commitment. I replied that the Soviets kept saying that such a commitment depended upon Pakistan's willingness to provide "reasonable assurances" of noninterference. I also said that the chicken-and-egg syndrome was driving me crazy.

Eagleburger noted that the United States was not in favor of having only two guarantors because that might be interpreted as the establishment of a "condominium" by the two superpowers in Afghanistan. The latest text of the guarantees was being carefully examined by State Department lawyers. He felt that there were many reasons to persevere in the search for a negotiated solution and stressed how interested the Pakistanis were. "They need a settlement," he said, "but they cannot afford to reach one which is not acceptable to the *mujahideen.*"

I told Eagleburger that I was giving the highest priority to the consultations with the refugees and that I was hoping that the scheme that had been worked out with the UNHCR would be acceptable to the Pakistanis and the Afghans. If that was the case I expected that Pakistan and the United States would be able decisively to engage in a credible exchange of assurances with the Soviet Union.

I then invited Yaqub to send a senior adviser to discuss with me the proposed procedure for the consultations because I felt that it was futile to talk to the Afghans if the Pakistanis were not in agreement. Yaqub sent Humayun Khan, one of his undersecretaries and an extremely able diplomat, with whom I spent two days in Geneva, August 8 and 9, explaining and discussing the consultative arrangements. He seemed very interested, and I even thought that he had found that our proposal met the requirements of his Government. At the same time he seemed very reticent whenever the UNHCR officials or I asked him to express an opinion. When he refused to indicate the possible timing of the consultation, I concluded that we were wasting time.

In a private conversation with Humayun I could hardly hide my annoyance. I told him that Yaqub—and only recently Eagleburger—had been insisting on the urgent need to carry out the consultations. I said that in the light of what had happened in May there was a need for some kind of "affirmative action" to revive the negotiations. I think that Humayun, who had become a good friend during the negotiations, was as upset as I was, but his instructions were undoubtedly very firm. Before leaving Geneva we had a pleasant dinner together, but I had already made up my mind: I would cancel my scheduled trip to the area because there was no chance of moving forward.

Although diplomatic analysts and press correspondents had been writing mixed reviews of the May negotiations, the announcement of the cancellation of my trip, which was made on August 18, left no doubt that the negotiations were in deep trouble. The Pakistanis, the Afghans, and the Soviets were furious. Apparently they all wanted me, presumably for entirely different reasons, to

undertake another round of shuttle diplomacy, and they did not expect an international official to disobey a formal decision. They made their unhappiness known, publicly and privately, but I was convinced that I had done the right thing. If the negotiations were in trouble, as I thought they were, an unsuccessful trip to the area would have killed them.

I was not in a mood to engage in endless arguments about my decision to cancel the trip, and, therefore, shortly after it was announced, I went to Guyana and Venezuela on another U.N. assignment and then on home leave. I came back to New York a couple of days before the opening of the General Assembly.

It was not a good time to hold consultations on the Afghan conflict. The environment of international relations, which had been deteriorating over many months, became extremely tense when on September 1 a Korean airliner was shot down by the Soviets as it entered their airspace. After many acrimonious meetings of the Security Council it was announced that, for the first time since he was appointed Foreign Minister, Gromyko would not attend the General Assembly. I had hoped that a meeting between him and Yaqub in New York might have dispelled at least part of the misunderstandings of the Moscow encounter.

I nonetheless held numerous meetings with my interlocutors that fall, during the annual session of the General Assembly. At the outset I stressed that the text of the settlement was virtually complete and that no purpose would be served by holding further drafting sessions unless certain basic understandings were reached regarding the manner in which the core issues should be dealt with.

I submitted to them a new type of document—a draft Memorandum of Understanding—intended to reaffirm the package deal, which the Afghans seemed increasingly inclined to recant, in order to dispel any doubts concerning Pakistan's acceptance of the provisions on noninterference and to force both sides to commit themselves to specific steps to give new impetus to the process.

The paper prompted intense negotiations that demonstrated either that the political will that had been so apparent when we started to draft the settlement had diminished significantly or that, if the political will was still there, it was eroded by insurmountable difficulties facing both sides.

To start with, both sides rejected the idea of a new type of document. They argued that it was "too formal" and "ambitious" and that we should stick to the established practice of Notes for the Record. That was in itself a clear indication that they were not prepared to accept any kind of firm undertaking. What worried me most was that both sides refused to accept a straightforward procedure to achieve a breakthrough. The Pakistanis were always afraid, at that time of the year, that any understanding on the substance of the settlement might reduce the number of votes in favor of the resolution. I once asked Shanawaz jokingly, "What do you prefer—a resolution or a settlement?"

The revival arrangements that I had proposed therefore failed to crystallize. The only positive development in the Note for the Record was Pakistan's formal admission that the provisions on noninterference would not be reopened. The Afghans had mixed feelings about this because it meant that the text on the

border issue, which Dost claimed had not been accepted, could not be reopened either.

I also tried to see if a parallel agreement could be reached on the consultations with the refugees. On August 31 I had sent a letter to the two foreign ministers with the suggested arrangements. The Pakistanis told me that the inclusion of a staff member of my office in the team that was to conduct the negotiations was not enough. They obviously wanted the team to have a higher political profile. I then suggested to both sides that we discontinue the discussion of formal arrangements and said that I would visit the refugees, who were, after all, under the protection of the U.N., to demonstrate the humanitarian concern of the organization and to assure them that we were actively seeking a settlement of the conflict. It would essentially be a carefully organized "goodwill" tour of the largest refugee camps.

Pakistan appeared uncertain that it was a good time to undertake the arrangements that were necessary to ensure that my trip would take place without any incidents. Kabul, in a formal, written reply rejected the procedure that the High Commissioner and I had formulated, and Dost became very agitated by the mere suggestion that I should visit the refugees. I would be grossly misused, according to him, by the Pakistanis and the "ringleaders"—and the negotiations might consequently break down.

On October 24, while my interlocutors were holding consultations in their respective capitals, I received late in the evening a telephone call from the representative at the U.N. of the World Federation of Trade Unions, demanding that I find out if the United States was preparing to invade Grenada, a small Caribbean country that had been facing serious political instability since 1979. I immediately called the U.S. Mission and talked to Ambassador Charles Lichenstein, one of the deputy permanent representatives, who told me that he did not think so but would check. A few minutes later he telephoned to assure me that the United States Government had no intention whatsoever, directly or indirectly, of launching an invasion of Grenada.

The following morning Grenada was invaded by forces belonging to the members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) with the assistance of the United States. ("In Grenada, Apocalypso Now!" somebody said at the U.N.) Ambassador Kirkpatrick told the Secretary General in a letter that her Government had agreed to accede to an urgent appeal from that organization "and to contribute logistical, transportation, and manpower support". What followed was an "encore" of the ritual that had taken place in the Security Council and in the General Assembly when Afghanistan was invaded—but with the roles reversed. This time it was the Soviet Ambassador who spoke about the U.N. Charter and international law, and it was the United States Ambassador who vetoed a resolution condemning the invasion.

After the U.S. veto in the Security Council, the General Assembly adopted a resolution reaffirming "the sovereign and inalienable right of Grenada to determine its own political, economic, and social system," deeply deploring the invasion, and calling for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops.[12]

Since the resolution also requested a report by the Secretary General on the situation in the island, Pérez de Cuéllar and I agreed that I should go there immediately. Jeane Kirkpatrick said that in Grenada I would get "a taste of the success" that I had not obtained regarding Afghanistan.[13]

Gradually the situation became normal, but Caspar Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense, kept making statements that undermined all my efforts to get from the Soviets a time frame for the withdrawal of those other foreign troops. "I cannot give a 'target date' or even set clear criteria for the withdrawal of American forces from Grenada," he said on November 10. "We could certainly wait until some kind of indication from the local Grenadians that conditions are such they can go on with their provisional government and have an election and all that," he added.[14] It was certainly not very helpful, but fortunately the *Washington Post* eventually announced, on June 12, 1985, that all American forces had left, at which point I started to tell the Soviets that a twenty-month occupation was admirable compared to theirs.

The 1983 report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly relating to Afghanistan stated that substantial progress had been made during the year but that it had not proved possible to bridge differences of attitude and position regarding a number of crucial issues. "It would indeed be regrettable," said the report, "if the solid work that has been done were to be wasted."[15]

Some seventy delegations participated in the Assembly debate that year, and Shahnawaz then mobilized his vote-getting forces with the proficiency that his diplomatic team had acquired. Like a professional TV producer, Shahnawaz had even arranged for a particularly eloquent Ambassador to be the last speaker in the debate. From a strategic position in the Assembly hall Shahnawaz instructed his colleague to keep talking (to the point that the poor man had to read out a couple of newspaper articles) until all the delegates were sitting and ready to vote. Shahnawaz then made a "Cut!" signal with his hands, and the speaker stopped. The votes were counted, and there were 116 for, 20 against, and 17 abstentions.[16]

In November I had a private talk with Larry Eagleburger in Washington. I felt a deep sense of frustration, mainly because prevailing attitudes did not seem to justify a continuation of the negotiations. Eagleburger told me that at the beginning of the year he had been fairly convinced that the Soviets wanted to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan but that he was now very concerned about the situation in the Kremlin. "We have the impression," he added, "that if we knock at the door there is nobody to open it." The fact, however, that there was no decision-making process in Moscow did not justify a termination of my efforts. "The U.N.," he said, "has the obligation to keep knocking at the door."

Many factors undoubtedly explained the increasingly serious difficulties that the negotiations had encountered. If Eagleburger's assessment was correct, "the situation in the Kremlin" was one of them. I was sure that there were others and that significant changes of attitude would be required not only in Moscow but also in Washington, Islamabad, and Kabul. But Eagleburger was right in pointing out that I was duty-bound to persist. I just needed to take a good rest at the beach before starting again.

XII

In March 1988, four years after Yuri Andropov's death, a Soviet scholar who was in Geneva during the last round of negotiations came to my office because he "had something important to tell me." He said that he had a friend who had been a member of the Soviet leadership and who had been in hospital when Andropov died. Shortly after Andropov's body was taken away, he had walked into the empty room. In the nighttable he had found some papers, most of which related to Afghanistan. "I am sure that your draft settlement was one of those papers," my visitor said. "Perhaps I am wrong, but I thought you should know what my friend told me."

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IV

1984

THE CHERNENKO INTERREGNUM

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6

THE WAR ESCALATES

Selig S. Harrison

Andropov's search for a diplomatic escape from Afghanistan was paralleled by a policy of resisting military escalation. Two leading military historians who differ concerning many aspects of the war, David C. Isby and Mark Urban, agree that his objective was to minimize casualties and to scale down operations while seeking a negotiated settlement.[1]

The mission of Soviet forces during the Andropov period was limited to holding key urban centers, maintaining the channels of communication between them, and interdicting resistance supply lines from base camps in Pakistan. The truce in the Pansjer valley had made this mission easier by allowing unimpeded access for military units and supply caravans to Kabul. In contrast to the two major division-level offensives of 1982 in the Pansjer region and in Herat, Soviet offensives during 1983 were confined to battalion and regiment-level attacks, accompanied by the scattered aerial bombing of resistance strongholds.

Andropov continued to resist escalation following the collapse of the Geneva negotiations in June. However, the resistance groups, encouraged by stepped-up aid from Washington and Islamabad, soon launched an offensive of their own that gained in intensity as the year progressed. The impact of the offensive was limited, but the prospect of increasingly well-equipped resistance operations led to accelerating pressures in Moscow for a reappraisal of Soviet policy. By the time Andropov died, a new Soviet strategy had begun to unfold. The Chernenko interregnum, from February 1984 until the advent of Gorbachev in March 1985, witnessed the biggest Soviet military operations of the war—six offensives that each involved from 5,000 to 10,000 troops and resulted in the death of 2,343 Soviet soldiers, the highest number of any year in the conflict.[2]

The Resistance on the Offensive

The most sustained resistance offensives of 1983 were designed to starve out and capture the Afghan Army garrisons in Urgun, Khost and Jaji, all within relatively easy logistical reach of ISI supply depots along the border with Pakistan. For the first time, the resistance fighters were systematically supplied with the firepower necessary for such ambitious operations. At Urgun an eyewitness saw artillery installations, captured personnel carriers, and some seventy antiaircraft guns, including both 12.7-millimeter and 14.5-millimeter machine guns.[3] But the intermittent battles over the border garrisons waged throughout the year revealed two major weaknesses of the resistance groups that undermined the impact of their offensive.

One of these weaknesses was their lack of training in how to operate their antiaircraft guns and their lack of trained sappers to remove the Soviet-laid mines that surrounded the garrisons. This factor reflected the broader inability of tribally based forces initially organized for guerrilla activities to adapt themselves for conventional warfare. Most of the Soviet soldiers killed in Afghanistan died in rocket blasts and ambushes in which the resistance fighters displayed a kamikaze-like bravery. But it was one thing to display bravery in small-scale operations conducted in the traditional style of internecine Afghan tribal conflict and quite another to accept the discipline and the command structure required for pitched battles against a regular army.

A more fundamental problem facing the resistance groups was their debilitating factionalism. When two tank crews defected from the Urgun garrison in October 1983, bringing their T-55s with them, endless arguments over the control and ownership of the tanks erupted between the two main resistance groups involved in arranging the defection. The bickering made it impossible to deploy the tanks in battle. With an eye to cannibalizing the tanks and splitting the resultant profits, however, it was agreed in "a farcical Afghan compromise"[4] that one group would get the front sections and the other the back.

The Pakistan-based resistance groups all carried on their operations inside Afghanistan by providing weapons and cash to local tribal groups in return for their cooperation. Despite the widespread nationalistic and religious animosity toward the Soviet presence, some tribal factions either supported Kabul or shifted back and forth in their loyalties depending on who proved to be the highest bidder. Others attempted to avoid involvement altogether. Two notable examples of pro-Kabul groups in 1983 were the Karokhel tribesmen, who helped the government to protect a major power station in the Sarobi valley, and a Tajik clan in the Andarab valley that guarded the critical Salang road. The most flamboyant local warlord with the most unabashed indifference to which side he served was Esmatullah Moslem, who started out with a resistance faction and then shifted back and forth several times until he ended up in command of the government's Kandahar militia. Whether or not it is true that "thousands, perhaps tens of thousands,"[5] of *mujahideen* fighters lost their lives in intergroup combat, it is clear that continual internecine skirmishes greatly vitiated the effectiveness of the resistance. Most of the armed clashes between resistance

groups were over control of the salable booty acquired either in battle or through the foreign aid cornucopia.

In addition to besieging border garrisons, the resistance offensive in 1983 focused on demonstrating that Kabul's defenses were penetrable. Until then most of the resistance groups had not gone beyond sporadic assassinations of Soviet advisers by small groups of gunmen and bomb attacks on Soviet military barracks and housing complexes in the city. As Soviet forces and the Afghan Army established better security, however, underground activity within the capital became more difficult, and resistance leaders decided on an all-out assault with artillery and mortars against Bala Hissar fort, a major Soviet military redoubt just inside the Kabul defense perimeter. The fact that the resistance groups were able to get through the perimeter with enough weaponry to inflict significant damage on the fort in a bloody all-night battle on August 13 was a serious embarrassment for Soviet military commanders. Another significant arena of resistance activity in mid-1983 was the Balkh area in the northeast, where a dashing local commander named Zabiullah staged a raid on an Afghan Army base in which several planes and an ammunition storage depot were destroyed.

When the assault on Bala Hissar fort was followed by the growing harassment of Soviet convoys on the main road leading to Kabul and by attempts to attack major airfields, the Soviet command retaliated with combined air and ground operations designed to punish localities suspected of providing help and sanctuary to the resistance. From November 26 to December 6, 1983, Soviet heavy bombers devastated three valleys in the Shomali area adjacent to the main road running north of Kabul. Meanwhile, Soviet and Afghan ground forces, backed by fighter planes and helicopters, attempted to flush out resistance hideouts.

The indiscriminate carpet bombing during the Shomali campaign and the renewed Pansjer offensive that was to follow soon thereafter suggested a deliberate effort to depopulate areas regarded as firmly committed to the resistance. Another significant aspect of the Shomali operations was the first large-scale deployment of helicopters in combined ground and air operations. This shift to helicopters foreshadowed the use of heliborne special forces in the decisive stage of the Soviet effort to crush the resistance offensive in the border areas.

The year ended with a stalemate in the bitter struggle over Urgun. The Kabul regime's defenders were still entrenched behind their battlements, but resistance units camped nearby were steadily stepping up their pressure. Finally, on January 22, 1984, the Red Army intervened with heliborne forces to relieve the besieged fort, ending at least temporarily the most serious challenge to the Soviet network of border garrisons.

It was clear by March 1984 that Ahmad Shah Massoud would not renew the year-long truce in the Pansjer valley, and by April the Salang road was once again under attack by his forces. The Soviet command then devised a tactical plan for its seventh Pansjer offensive that differed markedly from the earlier campaigns. Massoud's men had always been able to elude Soviet forces by taking refuge in the tributary valleys and escaping through high passes. This

time Moscow spread a wider net by sending forces big enough and mobile enough to move into the side valleys after occupying the main valley floor with mechanized columns. In addition, heliborne forces were to operate out of Bagram airfield in Kabul, pursuing Massoud's fighters into the mountains, and TU-16 Badgers were to bomb from altitudes so high that the resistance forces, caught unaware, would have no time to hide.

The new tactics proved to be successful in restoring Soviet control over the Salang road but did not put Massoud out of business. On April 20 Soviet rifle and assault regiments totaling some ten thousand men, accompanied by five thousand Afghan troops, moved into the valley. Their advance was slowed by mines, but they were able to take control of the flatlands within five days. Then, according to plan, they occupied the side valleys, driving many of Massoud's guerrillas into exposed areas where heliborne forces trapped them. By blocking the key passes out of the Pansjer and the nearby Andarab and Alishang valleys, the Soviet commanders compelled Massoud to disperse his units and to send them on difficult and circuitous escape routes.

By May 6 Babrak Karmal, President of the Kabul regime, could visit two key towns, Anawa and Rokka, proclaiming that the government was in control. In reality, however, Soviet and Afghan forces attempted to control only the southern half of the valley and soon pulled their men entirely out of the side valleys. Soviet forces remained in the Pansjer area until September, building a network of forts in the southern half. Before turning over the garrisons to the Afghan Army, they staged their eighth and final offensive, reaching once again into the side valleys. The Afghan forces were able to fend off most attacks on the Salang road during the rest of the war or to work out temporary truces with Massoud that kept the road open. Nevertheless, despite taking far more casualties than in the earlier Pansjer offensives, most of Massoud's men were able to regroup and eventually return to forge a potent new organization that later operated both in parts of the Pansjer and in other areas of the northeast.

The helicopter assault techniques unveiled in the Shomali and Pansjer offensives were reminiscent of American tactics in Vietnam and reflected a belated Soviet recognition that forces designed for a conventional war in European terrain had to be reshaped for the Afghan environment. The introduction of specially trained *spetznaz* commando units in 1984 also signified a new Soviet awareness of the nature of the challenge posed by the resistance. Heliborne assault forces and commandos became the twin symbols of the Soviet shift to Vietnam-style "search-and-destroy" operations on a countrywide scale.

At the same time that fighting was raging in the Pansjer valley under the glare of world press coverage, Soviet and Afghan regiments were staging a series of raids on resistance strongholds near Herat and in the Logar valley near Kabul, suffering heavy casualties. Another little-noticed but critically important operation was a concerted drive in late June to secure Bagram airfield and the surrounding Koh-e-Safi plain east of Kabul, a hotbed of resistance activity and a transit route for resistance supply caravans from Pakistan to the Pansjer area and to other parts of the north. The success of this offensive not only forced a diversion of the supply caravans to more dangerous and circuitous routes but

marked the climax of a protracted Soviet effort to make the capital secure. The June offensive made the possibility of a successful attack on the city increasingly remote and greatly bolstered the morale of the Kabul regime.

Soviet strategy focused increasingly during the year on relieving beleaguered border garrisons as part of a broader effort to destroy resistance stockpiles and to disrupt supply lines from Pakistan. In August a combined force of twelve thousand Soviet and Afghan soldiers drove back resistance fighters who were seeking to starve out the Afghan Army garrison at Jaji. Regiment-sized Soviet air assault forces waged intermittent offensives in the Khost area and in the Kunar valley beginning in September, and in November, five fresh squadrons of heavy-lift MI-6 helicopters were dispatched from Soviet bases in Turkestan to bolster these operations.[6] In the biggest operation since 1980, ten thousand Soviet soldiers and seventy-five hundred Afghan soldiers moved into the Khost area with tanks and artillery in mid-December despite winter weather hazards, turning back an entrenched resistance force.

Significantly, the Soviet border offensives of 1984 left the well-concealed resistance base camps and storage depots at Jaji and Zhawar untouched. This was one of the few bright spots in the otherwise discouraging outlook faced by the resistance as the Chernenko period drew to an end. In addition to its military setbacks, the resistance lost one of its most popular leaders, Commander Zabiullah, when his jeep hit a land mine in the Marmoul Gorge. To this day, it is not certain whether he was the victim of a *spetznaz* plot or of the machinations of a rival resistance leader. But Moscow had its own growing worries about Afghanistan as illness and drug abuse spread in the ranks of Soviet forces. With dysentery, typhoid, hepatitis, and pneumonia rampant, some reports indicated that half of the men in certain combat units were ill at any given time.[7]

A Visit to Kabul

In the prevailing Western image of the war during 1984, Kabul was on the brink of political and military collapse. But this stereotype of another Beirut bore little resemblance to reality even before the successful June offensive against resistance bases around the city. On a ten-day visit in March, I found a cohesive city-state with relatively secure military defenses. Despite the widespread popular distaste for their presence, Soviet commissars enjoyed the support of a functioning Afghan military and an administrative apparatus staffed at critical points by highly motivated Afghan Communists.

I did not know quite what to expect when I stepped off the plane from Moscow on March 3. I had been to Afghanistan seven times before over a period of thirty years, most recently in August 1978, shortly after the Communist takeover, and I had interviewed Pakistan-based resistance leaders frequently. Still, this was my first visit since the Soviet occupation. Even though I had questioned some of the more hyped-up accounts coming out of the resistance groups, I expected to feel palpable tensions and wondered whether the streets would be safe.

At first I wore my Irish tweed hat in the hope that I would not be mistaken for a Russian. This soon seemed superfluous, however, as I discovered that I could walk freely in all parts of the city, which was swollen to more than 2 million people by refugees displaced by the fighting in the countryside.

To my surprise, I found the same atmosphere of lazy confusion that I remembered from earlier decades. Security precautions seemed casual or nonexistent. At the Soviet Embassy and government ministries, several bored Afghan Army soldiers were standing around. Less than half a dozen policemen generally patrolled major intersections. Soviet forces and Afghan Army units stayed out of sight in their suburban encampments, although Red Army supply trucks occasionally held up traffic and a tank detachment turned up daily after dark to guard the Defense Ministry. The curfew hours from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M. were quiet, almost ghostlike, except for one night when an exchange of artillery fire could be heard for several hours in the distant mountains.

On one afternoon, March 9, police stopped my taxi at an intersection while six Afghan Army tanks hurried by on their way out of the city. I later learned that a riot had broken out at an army camp ten miles away over a decree extending the conscription term from two to three years. After leaving Kabul, I was bemused to read a United Press dispatch reporting "heavy fighting in the Afghan capital" on that day, linked to "a major rebel attack on the city."

Since I have only a rudimentary knowledge of Afghan languages, it was necessary to work through a Foreign Ministry interpreter in officially arranged interviews. However, I was not prevented from setting up my own independent schedule, and I was able to meet on my own with a variety of English-speaking sources, among them Afghan friends from earlier years not working directly for the government as well as several diplomats, including the Soviet and Indian ambassadors, the American chargé d'affaires, and the military attaches of several Third World embassies who had close contact with the Afghan armed forces. Some of my most informative discussions were with leftist Pakistani political exiles whom I had known for many years. These included Pushtun and Baluch leaders with tribal ties in Afghanistan who were close to President Babrak Karmal and to other Communist leaders but were not averse to discussing their problems and weaknesses. I did not attempt to seek out underground resistance leaders lest I compromise their security. All taxis in Kabul were government-operated, and my telephone in the almost empty Kabul Intercontinental Hotel was audibly tapped.

My visit to Kabul sensitized me to the tensions between Moscow and Karmal that were to lead to Karmal's replacement by Najibullah two years later, especially their differences over the nature of the proposed U.N. settlement and the need for power-sharing by the Communist regime with non-Communist elements. Above all, I became convinced that the Communist city-state in Kabul would prove to have much more staying power than generally expected despite its inability to establish control over much of the countryside.

Depicting Karmal as "much more than a puppet," I emphasized in the *Washington Post*[8] that he was one of the founders of the Afghan Communist Party and had been elected to the Afghan Parliament twice during the King's

democratic experiment in the 1960s. He took both his own role and the destiny of the Communist Party seriously. Thus, even as early as 1984, he was strongly resisting Soviet pressures for policy changes that he felt would threaten the future of the party, some relating to domestic issues and some to his attitude toward the U.N. negotiations.

In a two-hour conversation with Karmal on March 13, 1984, his first with an American since his installation as President in 1979, I was startled to find that his version of the status of the U.N. negotiations differed sharply from what Soviet diplomats and Cordovez were saying and that he did not accept some of the concessions that had been made by his own diplomats under Soviet pressure.

Cordovez had succeeded with considerable difficulty in keeping the negotiations on track despite the collapse of the June round. Resisting Pakistan's argument that the negotiations were "wide open" and that nothing previously decided was still binding, he won agreement on a more promising formula in December 1983. Both sides would agree not to reopen previously agreed-upon clauses of Sections I and II on the understanding that these clauses would become operative only as part of the completed overall agreement. On this basis, Islamabad and Kabul approved a Note for the Record defining what was settled, including the interference clauses that had caused so much controversy during the previous April. Moscow, for its part, agreed that these clauses would not become operative until the withdrawal issue was resolved as part of a final settlement—a significant concession that it had refused to make in 1983.

But Karmal brushed aside my references to the Note for the Record. "We have not agreed to anything," he said. "Those are just drafts, just notes, nothing is final." The U.N. negotiations would continue to be a "charade" until Pakistan agreed to deal with the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as a legitimate government. "We know their tricks," he declared. "We have known them for many centuries." If Soviet forces ever withdrew, Pakistan would immediately "redouble its interference." He was advising Moscow not to entertain discussion of a withdrawal commitment until after all "interference" by Pakistan had stopped. As for the Cordovez plan to make the aid cutoff and the start of the withdrawal simultaneous, Karmal replied that "we would never agree to such an idea. It would be suicide." Correctly anticipating what did, in fact, happen when Soviet forces withdrew, he reiterated several times that "Pakistan has no intention of stopping its interference, not the people who run Pakistan, whatever its diplomats are saying."

Despite my effort to meet six other key figures in the Politburo of the ruling party, Karmal was the only member of the high command I was permitted to see. This was "regrettable," Soviet Ambassador Fikryat A. Tabeev told me, because the top leadership of the party was "rich in talent and men of high quality." Karmal was super-sensitive to suggestions that he should be replaced as a precondition for a settlement, Tabeev said, and had no doubt viewed my request for interviews with other Politburo members in relation to such proposals.

Tabeev indirectly foreshadowed the shift to Najibullah by emphasizing the ethnic divisions in the party between the Pushtun Khalqis, who "have a very

strong base," and Karmal's largely non-Pushtun Parchamites. I had been introduced to Tabeev by an official of the Soviet U.N. Mission who came from the separatist-minded, oil-rich Tatar Republic, where Tabeev had been Communist Party Secretary. Tabeev made clear that he saw himself as an expert in party building. His mandate was to oversee the development of a strong Afghan Communist party. "In a country with such basic ethnic and social differences," he said, "it will be difficult to solve the problems of the party unless we are clear about ethnic realities and achieve the cooperation of the more reasonable Khalqis. We must also overcome some of the personal rivalries that weaken the party." The clear implication was that it might be necessary to replace Karmal, whose Pushtun identity was disputed, with a leader more acceptable to Pushtuns, although at this stage there were no hints that Najibullah would necessarily be the successor.

Acknowledging Soviet support for Cordovez's Note for the Record, Tabeev expressed confidence that "in another two years, a political solution will be easier because the party will be stronger and we will be further along with our reforms. The party wasn't much when I came but now it is being built up." Without directly alluding to Karmal, he observed that "it is necessary to move faster and more effectively with reforms that will widen our base of support." Another important signal came when one of Tabeev's aides complained that Karmal was suffering from ulcers and high blood pressure that "inhibit his dynamic prosecution of the war."

Compared to the doctrinaire policies of the Hafizullah Amin period, Karmal's approach was more in keeping with the Soviet desire for movement toward a broad-based regime. To counter propaganda that the Communists opposed Islam, the regime paid stipends to religious figures at all levels, including functionaries of mosques. A special government department kept mosques in good repair. Land belonging to religious dignitaries was exempt from land reforms, and peasants were free to own up to fifteen acres, both marked departures from Amin policies that had helped to provoke the 1978 insurgency. Nevertheless, Karmal did not go far enough to satisfy Moscow or to win Afghan popular support for his regime.

In particular, under pressure from orthodox party elements, Karmal resisted proposals for a more flexible approach toward the Pushtun tribes. Amin had attempted to replace the tribal power structure with a Communist administrative network. Karmal temporized when Soviet advisers and tribal allies of the Communist Party in the Pushtun areas pushed him to set up local government machinery in which the tribes as such would have formal representation in accordance with their numerical strength. On paper, Karmal promised not to run Communist candidates for local bodies below the level of the *woleswali,* or district, roughly equivalent to several counties in the West, which would have given the tribes de facto autonomy. But in practice, he dragged his feet, and the Amin system remained in effect.

My assessment in 1984 that the Communist regime would have more staying power than generally expected in the West was based on three factors: the size of a Soviet-subsidized administrative infrastructure that numbered some

375,000 Afghans; the systematic efforts that Moscow was making to train and equip the Afghan Communist armed forces; and the existence of a dedicated hard core within the Communist ranks. The government claimed that the party had one hundred thousand members, but independent estimates suggested that forty thousand was a more meaningful figure. Some 60 percent of the most highly motivated members, I learned, were assigned to the army, the police, and the intelligence services. It was this hard core that gave the security services their backbone.

To be sure, the critical factor holding the regime together was Soviet support. The fact that he had dedicated, well-equipped security services had a great deal to do with Najibullah's ability to stay in power for four years after the Soviet withdrawal. But once the Soviet Union imploded and he could no longer meet his payroll without fueling rampant inflation, his support eroded (although other factors cited in the Epilogue triggered his eventual ouster).

Although the resistance was never able to mount a coordinated offensive against Kabul, the placid military atmosphere that I found in 1984 was shattered during the months following my departure after the resistance began to receive 107-millimeter rockets purchased by the CIA from China. Until then the resistance had been using 82-millimeter mortars with a range of only three thousand meters. The Chinese missiles had a range of nine kilometers and could reach the capital from emplacements beyond the Soviet-Afghan defense perimeter. The rockets did little or no damage to military targets during the years thereafter but often hit civilian areas, inflicting significant casualties.

Unable to make a dent in Kabul's defenses, the resistance also continued with occasional success to stage assassinations and to bomb Soviet offices. Abdul Haq, the major resistance commander in the Kabul area, argued that rocket attacks and harassment of the regime were necessary for psychological warfare purposes. Similarly, he was more interested in political symbolism than in military results when he staged a mortar attack on the Bala Hissar fort in September 1984 that was patterned after his more ambitious 1983 assault. The fort was largely unscathed, but Haq had served notice once again that the resistance had not given up.

Representative Wilson Settles a Score

As the fortunes of the resistance declined during 1983 and 1984 and Kabul appeared increasingly impregnable, the pressures for a more ambitious U.S. aid effort intensified in Washington and in Islamabad. Casey and the CIA found themselves the targets of bitter criticism from both conservative and liberal members of Congress who charged that the weaponry being supplied to the resistance was inadequate in quantity and quality. "It's so damn obscure what the policy is," exploded Republican Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming. Referring to the CIA Deputy Director, Wallop said that "McMahon himself has told me straight out that U.S. aid cannot be successful."[9] Republican conservatives like Wallop and Senator Gordon Humphrey of New Hampshire led the

charge for more and better aid, backed by Democrats with hawkish defense and foreign policy views, notably a lanky, back-slapping Texan named Charles Wilson. But what made the congressional pressure overpowering was the fact that liberal Democrats led by Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts were also among the most vocal critics of Administration Afghan policy.

Humphrey and Tsongas formed a bipartisan House-Senate coalition known as the Afghan Task Force. By supporting expanded aid to counter a Soviet occupation force in Afghanistan, the Democratic liberals acquired political cover for their opposition to aiding the contras in Nicaragua, where there was no direct foreign presence. As the *Economist* observed, "Afghanistan is the right sort of secret war. Its bad guys are incontrovertibly evil, its heroes picturesquely brave, its battleground remote from the United States. For Congress, wearied by the moral ambiguities of Nicaragua, Afghanistan seemed a model case for anti-Communist action."[10]

Tsongas had introduced a resolution as early as September 1982 that called for "material assistance, as the United States considers appropriate, to help the Afghan people to fight effectively for their freedom." It would be "indefensible," the resolution declared, "to provide the freedom fighters with only enough aid to fight and die but not enough to advance their cause." Every member of the Senate had joined in cosponsoring it but one: Republican Charles Mathias of Maryland, who warned that it could become another Gulf of Tonkin resolution, opening the way for open-ended, escalating American involvement. CIA and State Department witnesses testified in closed sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Pakistan's role as a conduit for covert aid would be undermined by such an overt confirmation of the CIA role. Mathias was able to block action in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the resolution died.

Then, in August 1983, a six-member bipartisan delegation of members of the House of Representatives led by Representative Clarence Long, chairman of the powerful Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, visited Pakistan as part of an Asian tour. Representative Wilson, one of the six and a member of the subcommittee, had insisted on including Pakistan on the itinerary. It was his third trip to Islamabad. Wilson had arranged meetings with President Zia and other key officials as well as with resistance leaders, all of whom had emphasized the need for better weaponry, especially antiaircraft missiles more effective than the Soviet Sam-7 missiles that were being supplied. Returning to Washington, members of the Long delegation revived the idea of a congressional initiative for stepped-up aid. Tsongas reintroduced his resolution in the Senate on October 5, 1983, and Don Ritter followed in the House on November 18.

When the Senate resolution got to the floor at the very end of the session in late 1983, Mathias blocked it on a point of order. Then, for the next ten months, he waged a successful holding action in the Foreign Relations Committee that delayed passage of the Tsongas resolution. In January 1984 his legislative assistant telephoned me to say that the Senator had read with interest my articles on the war and the U.N. negotiations, including a recent one in the *Washington*

Post,[11] and would like to know my views concerning the resolution. At his request I submitted a memorandum to Mathias in which I urged that the resolution be amended to focus on the need to couple military pressure with realistic diplomacy. Mathias circulated the memorandum to several key members of the committee.

An explicit reference to "material assistance," I said, "would provide overt confirmation of what is supposed to be a covert program, thus feeding the Soviet propaganda machine." Above all, I emphasized that "the United States has not given meaningful support to the United Nations mediation effort." Cordovez, I pointed out, was about to undertake his next round of shuttle diplomacy, "and the enactment of the resolution in its present form would directly undermine his mission" by reinforcing the Soviet belief "that the United States is not prepared to honor the proposed settlement on the terms envisaged in the draft text painstakingly negotiated by Cordovez during the past two years."[12]

On January 30, Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs, underlined the basic issue in the debate over the resolution when he formally replied to my *Washington Post* article in a letter to the editor, insisting that the United States did support the U.N. negotiations.[13] On January 31 the Foreign Relations Committee held an acrimonious two-hour session on the resolution in which Mathias won significant support. However, when he found that he was slightly short of enough votes to kill the resolution, Mathias invoked a point of order again, and the meeting ended without a vote. Tsongas later agreed to withdraw the resolution until Cordovez had completed his scheduled round of shuttle diplomacy and to seek a compromise with Mathias during the interim. But the two Senators were unable to resolve their differences. The House had already passed its resolution, and Tsongas, who was steadily acquiring additional cosponsors for the resolution, felt confident that Mathias would have to yield, especially after Cordovez returned from his shuttle mission in April empty-handed. In October 1984 the resolution was unanimously adopted with a concession to Mathias. In place of the reference to "material assistance," it called on the Administration to "effectively support" the resistance.

It was during the early months of 1984 that Representative Wilson literally forced the CIA to expand the Afghan program, single-handedly pushing through a massive increase in appropriations for the 1984–1985 fiscal year. The $30 million that had initially been requested by the CIA shot up to $120 million. Wilson's success in quadrupling the Afghan program opened the way for burgeoning increases to $250 million in 1985, $470 million in 1986, and $630 million in 1987, all of which were matched by Saudi increases on the same order.

Although the Intelligence Committee authorizes CIA appropriations, it is the Appropriations Committee that actually votes the money. Wilson was a member of the Defense Subcommittee of Appropriations, where he demanded a special Afghan aid appropriation of $40 million. "I just pulled that figure out of the air," he recalled. Wilson refused to support any of the weapons systems or other items desired by his colleagues unless they agreed to his request. "I didn't have too much trouble once they realized I was serious," he said, "because most of those

guys have bases in their districts to protect and what they are concerned about is the spending in their districts. None of them really opposed helping the Afghans, and I was able to trade off—you know, 'I'll support those tanks, I want my money for the *mujahideen.*' It only took me about a month to turn around the subcommittee. The real difficult stuff was in the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Foreign Operations Subcommittee over maintaining military aid to Pakistan. If we hadn't given them the F-16s, Zia would have pulled the plug on Afghanistan." In addition to the $40 million of reprogrammed Defense Department funds that were added to the CIA's original $30 million request in April, Wilson also got an additional $50 million in July, added to an air force account labeled "other procurement." After the 1984 aid breakthrough, the White House embraced the Afghan cause with growing enthusiasm as a showcase of the Reagan Doctrine, and Wilson's role became less crucial. But President Zia of Pakistan singled him out for lavish praise in a *60 Minutes* interview. "If there is a single man who has played a part in the war that will be recorded in golden letters, it is the Right Honorable Charley Wilson. Charley did it."[14]

A Naval Academy graduate, Wilson told me that he embarked on his Afghan crusade because "I hated the Russians and the Communists. There were 167 funerals in my district during the Vietnam War, and I felt we should get even." Wilson added that he had "always despised the Indians with a visceral hatred, the Nehrus and the Gandhis," and this had led him to identify with Pakistan. During his navy days he had made lasting friendships with several Pakistani naval officers during stopovers in Karachi. Later he had developed a close working relationship in Washington with Pakistani Ambassador Yaqub Khan before Yaqub became Foreign Minister. On his three trips to Pakistan in 1982 and 1983, Wilson had concluded with "disgust" that the CIA was more cautious than the Pakistanis, who wanted an upgraded Afghan aid program. "Casey was not against us," he explained. "He liked the Afghan program, and he hated the Russians, but he didn't believe at that stage that the Afghans could win. His heart was in Nicaragua, and he was preoccupied with the mining of the harbors and the contras. He always told us in committee that he would like to do more, but his budget wasn't big enough. So I decided to prove that money wasn't the problem, to give him the money even if he didn't ask for it."

In July 1984, impressed by Wilson's remarkable legislative results, Casey called him in, "and we worked closely together after that during the rest of the war. I helped him with the contras, and he became steadily more positive about the Afghans. I convinced him that it was not as hopeless as he thought. I showed him that the resistance was getting better. He really did want to stick it to the Russians, you know." While the CIA was still anxious to preserve "plausible deniability" and refused to entertain the idea of using the Stinger missile or other American weaponry, Wilson persuaded Casey to try European antiaircraft weaponry that would be more effective than the Sam-7s in combatting the MI-24 helicopters. Part of the expanded appropriations went to purchase a Swiss antiaircraft cannon advocated by Wilson, the Oerlikon. When the new gun proved to be too bulky for the resistance to carry over Afghan trails, the CIA

bought some British Blowpipe missiles. But the Blowpipe, too, proved ineffective, leading to stepped-up demands for the Stinger.

Casey demonstrated his desire to "stick it to the Russians" when he urged Pakistani intelligence officials to carry the war into the Soviet Central Asian republics by smuggling written propaganda across the Oxus and conducting sabotage operations. Eventually, he envisaged providing arms to encourage local uprisings. Brigadier General Mohammad Yousaf, who directed Afghan operations for Pakistan's Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI), stated in a book on the war that Casey pushed for operations inside Soviet territory during a visit to Islamabad in October, 1984, offering to provide ten thousand copies of the Koran in Central Asian languages as a starter.[15] The idea was to utilize Afghans belonging to the same ethnic groups that were dominant in adjacent parts of Central Asia, especially Uzbeks and Tajiks.

Islamic fundamentalist resistance groups in the northern Afghan provinces had already developed contacts in Central Asia and had been agitating for such a program. General Yousaf and the ISI Director, Lieutenant General Akhtar Rahman Khan, who were sympathetic to the fundamentalists, were quick to embrace the Casey plan despite the strong reservations expressed by Foreign Minister Yaqub and the lukewarm approval of President Zia. During the next year alone, Yousaf said, the ISI distributed some five thousand copies of the Koran in batches of three hundred at a time, carried across in small rubber boats at night. The ISI also organized fifteen commando squads to carry out a variety of sabotage missions designed to derail trains, knock down power lines, and blow up military installations, factories, and fuel storage depots. By the end of 1985, however, Yousaf recalled, "it became obvious that the U.S. had got cold feet. The CIA and others gave us every encouragement unofficially to take the war into Soviet territory, but they were careful not to provide anything that might be traceable to the United States."[16]

Immediately after Casey's visit, the CIA had provided some maps of Central Asian areas adjacent to Afghanistan, but the flow of such maps soon stopped. The CIA also refused to provide satellite photographs requested by the ISI and dropped the idea of sending in arms. The denial of satellite photos forced him to curtail rocket attacks on Central Asian targets from bases inside Afghanistan, Yousaf said, but he kept up the sabotage missions, including the demolition of a major fuel storage complex at Sherkhan. President Zia drew the line, however, when Yousaf planned to blow up the newly built "Friendship Bridge" spanning the Oxus at Termez. This was a major Soviet project that had enabled Moscow for the first time to establish a railhead on the Afghan side of the river. Worried that the success of the raid might touch off Soviet attacks on key bridges inside Pakistan, Zia canceled the plan.

Casey's quiet encouragement emboldened the ISI to keep up the Central Asian operations throughout most of the war. Yousaf's most ambitious venture was to come in April 1987 when a thirty-four-man commando squad penetrated nearly twenty miles inside Soviet territory and staged a successful rocket assault against a factory. Several days after this happened, the Soviet Ambassador to

Pakistan stormed into the office of Foreign Minister Yaqub and threatened a direct Soviet attack on Pakistan in retaliation for any further raids inside Soviet territory, prompting Zia to call off the cross-border program completely.

While refusing to provide satellite photos on Central Asia and aid for operations there that could be traced to the United States, the CIA did give the ISI extensive satellite reconnaissance findings on Soviet targets in Afghanistan itself, together with other information on Soviet military plans in Afghanistan based on satellite intelligence and intercepts from Soviet communications. Moreover, beginning in mid-1985, the CIA began sending high-tech equipment for use in Afghanistan that had previously been withheld, including sophisticated communications gear, delayed-timing devices for plastic explosives used in urban sabotage, long-range sniper rifles, a high-precision targeting device for mortars that was linked to a U.S. Navy satellite, and wire-guided tank missiles. According to U.S. officials who were involved, this change of policy was precipitated by alarming intelligence information from newly acquired high-level sources "in the upper reaches of the Soviet Defense Ministry" concerning Soviet plans to escalate the war.[17] Already under pressure from Congress and from Republican conservatives to upgrade the aid program, the Reagan Administration responded decisively to the new intelligence. In March 1985 the President signed National Security Decision Directive 166, authorizing efforts to drive Soviet forces from Afghanistan by "all means available."[18]

Pakistan, the Fundamentalists, and the King

Pakistani accounts of the war by Brigadier Yousaf and Riaz Mohammed Khan of the Foreign Ministry emphasize that a change of attitude in Islamabad made possible the American decision to upgrade the quantity and the quality of aid. The United States acted, Khan said, only after Pakistan had "signaled its readiness to raise the temperature. By 1984 it had become clear that the resistance possessed the will to fight. Accordingly, Pakistan decided to allow the supply of improved weapons to the *mujahideen* and approached the U.S. to raise its commitment."[19]

By 1984 it had also become clear that the resistance was not doing very well and that Moscow was improving its tactics. Faced with this situation, General Akhtar and his advisers, most of them hard-line nationalists and fundamentalist sympathizers, felt that the ISI should play a more direct role in the war through the covert use of Pakistani military personnel. Akhtar also wanted the ISI to assert stronger control over the resistance in order to shape it into an effective fighting force centered around the fundamentalist factions. More and better U.S. aid was an essential part of a new activist strategy.

In this new strategy, Yousaf recalled, "I was now cast in the role of overall guerrilla leader,"[20] presiding directly over the strategy sessions of the Afghan resistance groups.[21] It was supposed to be a secret that Pakistan was funneling weapons to the resistance, but "even more taboo was the fact that ISI was training the *mujahideen,* planning their combat operations, and often accom-

panying them inside Afghanistan as advisers. Although the involvement of Pakistan in the field was guessed at, it was never, ever publicly admitted."[22]

The ISI operated seven training camps where a grand total of eighty thousand resistance fighters were trained during the course of the war, Yousaf said; the flow of one thousand a month in 1984 increased steadily in number. In addition, there were eleven Pakistani teams of three men each operating inside Afghanistan, generally consisting of a major and two junior officers dressed like Afghans. Playing a role similar to that of special forces advisers in the U.S. Army, they guided local commanders "on all aspects of military operations," conducted training activities, and prepared intelligence reports.[23]

The ISI devised a system for the distribution of U.S. weaponry calculated to strengthen the power of its fundamentalist allies. Instead of dealing directly with the local commanders, as the CIA urged, Yousaf turned over the arms to the seven resistance leaders, who then allocated the aid to the commanders of their choice. Local commanders had to join one of the parties in order to get weapons. Thus, since "67 to 73 percent" of the weapons went to the four fundamentalist parties,[24] the ISI distribution system gave the fundamentalist leaders powerful leverage. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezbe Islami and Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamaat Islami got the lion's share both of the weapons and of the cash support that was also doled out by the ISI for salaries of the party faithful and for transport costs. The ISI distribution system contributed to the pervasive corruption and smuggling in the aid pipeline, including narcotics trafficking on a colossal scale. A U.S. government estimate stated that heroin from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region accounted for 51 percent of the U.S. supply in 1984.[25]

Both Brigadier Yousaf and Riaz Mohammed Khan make clear that the escalation in Pakistan's role in the war reflected the growing ascendancy of the ISI in Pakistani councils at the expense of the Foreign Ministry. Given the stalemate in the U.N. negotiations after Andropov's death, Yaqub could no longer argue with much credibility that raising the temperature would upset a promising diplomatic process. As the ISI's power grew, so did its efforts to subvert Pakistan's role in the U.N. regotiations. General Akhtar and Brigadier Yousaf recognized that Yaqub did not share their goal of installing a fundamentalist regime in Kabul. They criticized him for failing to insist on the replacement of the Communist regime as a precondition for a settlement and believed that he would betray the resistance cause by agreeing to a coalition government.

"Our Foreign Office was determined to do a deal," Yousaf complained, "and under no circumstances would the *mujahideen*'s leaders be given a right to veto any agreement. He never took them into his confidence or revealed his intentions."[26] Representative Wilson said that Zia had a more equivocal attitude because the U.N. negotiations "were just window dressing as far as he was concerned. He thought they would help to deter any Russian military action against Pakistan. So far as I was concerned, I dismissed what was going on at Geneva as total bullshit."

Except for the Jamaat Islami and other fundamentalist groups, Pakistan public opinion strongly supported Yaqub's policy of pursuing the U.N. negotiations seriously. Uneasiness over the dislocations caused by the Afghan refugee

influx and fears of Soviet reprisals were growing steadily. Calling for "urgent" efforts to reach a settlement, former Air Marshal Zulfiqar Ali Khan warned that the refugee presence "cannot go on indefinitely." He argued that Moscow "does not need the 'warm waters' of Pakistan," as was often argued, and that a settlement could be achieved if Islamabad agreed to direct talks with the Kabul regime.[27] A leading newspaper, *The Muslim* of Islamabad, repeatedly urged direct talks.[28] Retired diplomat Sajjad Hyder, former Ambassador to Moscow, was also a vocal critic of Pakistan's role in the war, stressing the risks of confronting the Soviet Union and India simultaneously.[29] Former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi declared that "the involvement of the United States in the *mujahideen* struggle cannot but affect Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union, compound its security concerns, and put in jeopardy its good faith in the Geneva negotiations." Criticizing "the policy of raising the costs of the Soviet occupation," Shahi advocated "the transformation of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan into a zone of peace, neutrality, and freedom from the military presence of the superpowers"[30] in order "to lend assurance to the Soviets that their retreat from Afghanistan would confer no advantage, political or strategic, to the United States"—a proposal strikingly similar to the one that Cyrus Vance had attempted to pursue in 1980.

The lack of momentum in the U.N. effort during 1984 made it easier for the ISI to build resistance operations around the fundamentalist groups, discounting the more moderate elements identified with Zahir Shah, who wanted to test the possibilities for a negotiated settlement. The fundamentalists were closer to the ISI than their rivals, partly because they had been working for Pakistani intelligence agencies against the Pushtun-dominated Afghan monarchy and the Daud regime even before the Communist takeover and the Soviet invasion. More important, the ISI high command shared their world view. General Akhtar, like Zia, saw the war as a way to achieve a "strategic realignment" in which Afghanistan and Pakistan would be part of an anti-Indian, pan-Islamic regional bloc dominated by fundamentalist parties.

Representative Wilson said that the Pakistanis were "totally committed to Hekmatyar because Zia saw the world as a conflict between Muslims and Hindus, and he thought he could count on Hekmatyar to work for a pan-Islamic entity that could stand up to India." Wilson recalled a map that Zia had also shown to me in which overlays indicated the goal of a confederation embracing first Pakistan and Afghanistan and eventually Central Asia and Kashmir.

Apart from their ideological affinity, by channeling weapons aid through the fundamentalists the ISI consciously minimized support for local Pushtun tribal leaders, who were largely allied with nonfundamentalist groups. This anti-Pushtun bias was rooted in the historic Pakistani conflict with Kabul over Pushtun areas straddling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. But the ISI rationalized its denial of aid to groups linked with the Pushtun tribal structure[31] in military terms. Echoing what the ISI said in briefings with journalists that I attended, the *Economist* explained that while "the British used to feel romantic about them, seeing them as great mountain warriors, today's Pathans have turned out to be lousy guerrillas." In addition to tribal and clan factionalism, "it

is hard to set up a sensible command structure among Pathans, since their tradition requires that decisions should be taken by the village elder, who is probably a creaky septuagenarian with no understanding of modern warfare. Mobile units are impossible, since each group is allowed to fight on and for its piece of land only." By contrast, the Tajiks and other minorities are "less cramped by tribal tradition."[32]

The ISI's assessment of fundamentalist strength conflicted sharply with that of many Pakistani and foreign observers, myself included, who emphasized the important military role being played by tribally based Pushtun local commanders sympathetic to Zahir Shah. To the extent that the fundamentalists had limited and transitory influence inside Afghanistan, in this view, it resulted from their ability to dispense weaponry and money as a conduit for the ISI. Ideologically, most commanders, with their tribal ties and their attachment to traditional forms of Islam, were repelled by fundamentalist demands for the abolition of the tribal structure as incompatible with their conception of a centralized Islamic state. It was precisely because each local tribal group was willing to fight "on and for its piece of land" that the resistance had proved to be so tenacious in the face of Soviet power.

Riaz Mohammed Khan describes the intermittent efforts made by the Foreign Ministry to shift Pakistani support from the fundamentalists to Zahir Shah and his followers. In each case, the ISI undermined these efforts, beginning with the promising 1981 Loya Jirga effort recounted in Chapter 3. The nominal ISI argument was that the fundamentalists were the shock troops of the resistance and that Pakistan could not afford to alienate them by giving a more prominent role to Zahir Shah, since he had persecuted them during his tenure as King. But a more fundamental concern was the fact that Zahir Shah favored diplomatic efforts in tandem with the armed struggle and supported the U.N. negotiations.

During most of the war, Islamabad denied periodic overtures by emissaries of Zahir Shah for permission to visit Pakistan as the prelude to a possible visit by the King. Their presence would divide an already divided resistance, the ISI argued, and the King's life would be in danger if he did decide to come. A notable exception came in October 1983, when Islamabad gave a visa to the King's brother-in-law, Humayun Assefy, a former Afghan diplomat. Explaining why the visit produced no significant results, Riaz Mohammed Khan said that "as the prospects of a settlement receded in the second half of 1983, there was simply no incentive to move in a new direction that would require considerable adjustment and would risk alienating the Afghan *mujahideen* groups. The question of the role of Zahir Shah, however, did not disappear but continued to pose choices for Pakistani policy makers that proved too difficult to make."[33]

The United States did not make a serious effort to prevent the consolidation of fundamentalist control over the resistance or to encourage support for Zahir Shah and the moderate elements. One of the few officials who raised the issue in interagency meetings was Elie Krakowski, an adviser to Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle. Krakowski was an active proponent of an upgraded Afghan aid program but objected to giving the ISI a free hand in allocating aid. Like Perle, he emphasized the importance of Israel in U.S. policy. While he did

not foresee that Pakistani-trained fundamentalists would one day be implicated in attacks on targets in the United States itself, such as the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, he argued that building up the Afghan fundamentalists would damage long-term U.S. regional interests in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle East. But "no one at State was interested," he said, "and the agency was definitely against putting pressure on the Pakistanis." Part of the reason for the CIA's "pandering" to the ISI, he said, was its desire not to disturb valuable ties that went beyond the Afghan war. "The agency was interested in a variety of things there," he explained. "They were collecting lots of interesting stuff on the Soviet Union and other things."

"We knew we were involved with Islamic fundamentalists," Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger recalled in an interview. "We knew they were not very nice people, that they were not all people attached to democracy. But we had this terrible problem of making choices." Asked whether the United States had ever tried to promote nonfundamentalist moderate elements, he replied that "there was some attempt to do that, but the real point is we had to make choices. Remember what Churchill said, 'If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.'"[34]

In Brigadier Yousaf's account, there was "endless bickering" and "never-ending friction" between the ISI and the CIA, partly over the fundamentalists but primarily over control of the aid program. "From the start," he said, "the Americans wanted to be directly involved with the distribution of weapons, operational planning, and training. From the start, until the last Soviet soldier quit the country, we resisted."[35]

7

THE LONG WINTER

Diego Cordovez

- *Early in 1984 things look bleak*
- *Talks with Zia and Yaqub in Casablanca*
- *My third trip to the East (April 1984)*
- *Karmal tries to move backwards*
- *A risky take-off at night*
- *The long wait for a reply from Kabul*
- *To Shanghai and Beijing for talks with Qian Quichen*
- *A disappointing meeting with Chernenko*
- *At Geneva Three (August 1984) Pakistan moves*
- *An encounter with Georgi Arbatov and Melina Mercouri*
- *The superpowers' new negotiators: Armacost and Kozirev*
- *Chernenko dies and Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader*
- *During the fourth round of shuttle diplomacy (May 1985), a message from Moscow*

I

In politics and diplomacy people often say things that are later systematically misquoted or distorted. John F. Kennedy never said that he was a Berliner, and Harold Macmillan did not say "You've never had it so good." But the fact that such eminent statesmen, whom I greatly admire, had been misrepresented did not diminish my annoyance when I was accused, time and again, of having said that 95 percent of the settlement was ready.

What I did say in an interview with my good friend Iftikhar Ali of the

Associated Press of Pakistan was that "95 percent of the text of a draft comprehensive settlement was ready." That was, of course, entirely true—and my statement was correctly quoted in all Pakistani papers.[1] President Zia had made a wholly speculative statement at the time—"USSR to pull out shortly"[2]—but it was what I said that was used, distorted, contorted, and twisted for years.

It was not even acknowledged at the time that my statement, when it was accurately quoted in Pakistan, prompted the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad to say that Kabul would be willing "to give a time table" for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.[3] It was the first time that a Soviet official had said so publicly. This was significant in itself but even more so because it was not what Dost was then saying at the negotiating table—nor indeed what he was willing to do for a long time.

Although the "95 percent" flap occurred in May 1983, my words were being thrown back at me with particular emphasis in early 1984, presumably because things then looked particularly bleak. International relations were very tense, and the U.N. process had become increasingly discredited after the June 1983 round of talks. Walking up and down the beach at Bal Harbor, Florida, in January 1984, I kept trying to assess the situation and to map out a new strategy to revitalize the Geneva negotiations.

Time and again I had been told that the key to a settlement was the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. That was all that seemed to matter to the United States, and indeed to all the other Western countries. I therefore had to find a way to persuade the Soviets to start talking about the time frame for the withdrawal of troops. To that end I had to persuade Pakistan to give the "reasonable assurances" of noninterference that Safronchuk had demanded.

I had obviously failed to entice Pakistan with the arrangements to consult the refugees. Every time we were close to formulating a scheme, there was profound hesitation in the Pakistani delegation. At one time the Pakistanis had agreed to leave the leaders aside and to authorize me to consult a cross-section of the refugee population, but they subsequently changed their mind. I suspected then, and ascertained later, that there was a deep division between the Foreign Office and the powerful ISI, under the command of General Hamid Gul. This was, of course, only part of a wider controversy between those who wanted a settlement because the conflict was dangerous to Pakistan and those who felt that a settlement should be concluded only after all possible "packages" of U.S. assistance had been approved and delivered.

I remained convinced that I had been right in insisting that the form of the settlement should be decided upon at a later stage. But the Soviets had always been uneasy and insisted on the need for a binding document. Had the signal that Yaqub tried to send in April 1983 referred to a legal instrument, the Soviets might have been convinced.

The United States, "the country of lawyers," had indicated that it wanted a "credible" commitment by the Soviet Union. Washington would therefore welcome an indication from the Soviets that they were ready to include the provisions on withdrawal in a legal instrument. The Soviets had been saying throughout 1983 that they would sign nothing, but they might have found themselves

obliged to do so as a logical consequence of their insistence on separate legal documents.

By the time I returned from my vacation I was fairly convinced that the strategy to reactivate the negotiations should involve a shift to the consideration of the form of the settlement. Technically this would not be difficult because a single text with agreed-upon provisions concerning the four elements of the settlement was virtually ready—or should I say 95 percent ready!—but I was not unaware of the fact it would require some very tough political decisions.

II

As soon as I returned from Florida on January 9, 1984, I held a number of meetings on the new approach that I was considering. A discussion with Gennadi Yestafiev, a Soviet official of the Secretariat who had the reputation of being very well informed, was particularly useful. He noted that the Soviets were very legalistic and would readily approve my strategy. Yestafiev wanted to know the date of my next trip to the area, but I was not prepared to say anything before a meeting that Pérez de Cuéllar and I were supposed to have with Zia and Yaqub at a Summit of the Islamic Conference in Casablanca.

We flew to Morocco on January 15 and stayed in one of the houses that affluent Moroccans had made available to the Government to lodge the delegations to the conference. It was a very comfortable residence, and we were given loads of fancy foods at all hours. Yaser Arafat, the Emir of Qatar, and Rauf Denktash, the leader of the Turkish Community of Cyprus, among others, called on the Secretary General at the house. We went to see the King of Saudi Arabia at a palace that he keeps in Casablanca but were told that he was taking a nap!

Zia was accompanied by Yaqub and Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the Minister of Finance. We told them that we were not prepared to beg the interlocutors and that therefore, unless we received credible expressions of political will from all concerned, I would not continue my mediation efforts. Zia said that we were dealing with a very difficult conflict that, like the complicated situations in Cyprus and in the Middle East, might take years to settle. It was essential in his view to expedite my trip to the area to explore "different methodologies" concerning the problems that had been encountered. That certainly fitted my plans. We then engaged in yet another discussion about the consultations with the refugees, the format of the negotiations, and the chicken-and-egg difficulties that had arisen concerning noninterference and withdrawal.

The meeting had to be concluded more or less abruptly because a head of state came to see Zia, but I arranged with Yaqub to have a separate meeting the following day. We had a long conversation in his suite at El Mansou hotel. I concluded that he would be willing to adopt new approaches, although he underlined forcefully that the conclusion of bilateral agreements required a policy decision by the President. I predicted that Kabul would be much more insistent on direct talks and proposed, as an intermediate step, that in future the

two interlocutors be in separate rooms but under the same roof at the Palais des Nations.

On my way out I said to Shaharyar that I felt very frustrated, but once I was able to review my conversation with Yaqub I concluded that it had, in fact, been quite encouraging. He seemed to be himself again, and although it was evident that he was facing strong opposition at home, he appeared prepared to fight for a settlement. I knew that he had registered the parameters of my new strategy.

Not long after I returned to New York Andropov died, and there was some speculation that Mikhail Gorbachev might succeed his mentor. This lifted my spirits, but subsequent reports indicated that he did not stand a chance "nor did he mount an open fight for the job."[4] Konstantin Chernenko, a member of the Brezhnevite Old Guard, became the new leader of the Soviet Union, and the prospects of reaching a settlement in the Afghan crisis seemed severely reduced. To show that I had not stopped "knocking at their doors" I decided to undertake one more round of shuttle diplomacy.

III

While preparing for my trip I was kept extremely busy by developments in the Iran-Iraq war. After endless discussions with representatives of the two countries and with members of the Security Council, a team of specialists dispatched by the Secretary General concluded that Iraq had used mustard gas as well as a nerve agent known as Tabun.

On Sunday April 1 I left for Geneva and points east. My first stop was in Teheran where Foreign Minister Velayati and his senior aides were particularly friendly because they had appreciated my efforts to investigate the use of chemical weapons. Velayati even agreed for the first time to work out with me a Note for the Record setting out the position of his Government. At a time when the Afghans had started to raise with increasing frequency the need to ensure Iran's support of the negotiation process, this step would prove extremely useful. We prepared overnight a draft in which Velayati and his advisers made only minor changes. In the Note the Government of Iran undertook to "endorse a comprehensive settlement which would involve the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the return of their refugees to their homes in safety and honor." It could not be better.

The Iranians had consistently wanted to appear as the main advocates and defenders of the rights of the *mujahideen,* and during my stay in Teheran we had our usual exchange on the subject. The Iranians maintained that they were much more honest and determined friends of the *mujahideen* than the Pakistanis. Whenever the question was discussed I took the position that the General Assembly of the United Nations had decided that Mr. Karmal should take the seat of Afghanistan in the United Nations. His credentials were reviewed and approved every year with only a few, and generally mild, expressions of reproof. I also noted that the resolution that served as the basis of the Geneva diplomatic process did not contain any provision for the participation of the *mujahideen.* An

entirely different approach had been adopted with regard to the conflict in Cambodia, and the Secretary General had been able to contact all the parties concerned. There was something incongruous in the attitude of both Iran and Pakistan: They refused to recognize the Karmal regime, yet both, like the United States and a number of other Western countries, had embassies in Kabul with accredited Chargés d'Affaires. Afghanistan likewise had embassies in Teheran, Islamabad, and Washington.

With the Note for the Record in my pocket, I flew to Kabul on April 5. My first discussion with Dost started in a friendly and somewhat philosophical tone, but he then tersely told me that the time had come to hold direct talks. I readily realized that his position on the format of the negotiations reflected a hardened stance on the question of withdrawal. Dost was particularly firm and determined. He even brushed aside as "meaningless" the Note for the Record that I had extracted from the Iranians.

I told Karmal, when he repeated that it was childish of Pakistan to insist on the time frame for withdrawal, that if we were unable to find a practical formula to resume the negotiations the diplomatic process would come to an end. My meeting with Karmal was not very pleasant because when I entered the room in which he usually received me he started to ask me, in front of the press and the television cameras, what I thought about President Reagan "and his invasion of Grenada."

When the discussions continued with Dost I had the impression that a signal had arrived from Moscow because much to my surprise Dost accepted the new format that I had proposed "to bring you and Yaqub closer to each other" during proximity talks. Dost also agreed that, if Pakistan agreed to sign a bilateral agreement on noninterference, Kabul and Moscow would start simultaneous discussions on a separate agreement on withdrawal.

On April 8 I held my first meeting with Yaqub in Islamabad. He was in top form, wearing a white suit. (Yaqub's sartorial habits are individual to the point of eccentricity.) He told me that Pakistan was determined to continue working toward a settlement and had "a sense of the speed required." I recalled our conversation in Casablanca and stressed that it might be possible to resume the negotiations if we started to talk about the form and the legal status of the settlement.

I told Yaqub that during my last visit to Kabul I had been able to move Dost somewhat only when I mentioned that Pakistan might agree to conclude a bilateral agreement on noninterference, on the understanding that the Afghans would simultaneously begin negotiations on withdrawal with the Soviets. I assured Yaqub that I would see to it that the structure of the settlement—and all the "package deal" understandings—would remain unaltered. I underlined the main advantage the new strategy: The Soviet Union, not Afghanistan alone, would undertake, albeit indirectly, to announce in due course the time frame for withdrawal.

I then held a very long and, at times, tense meeting with Zia. It was an important meeting because it persuaded the President of Pakistan that he had to make a bold move in order to give impetus to the negotiations. His attitude

convinced me that Pakistan needed and wanted a settlement and that the change of strategy that I was trying to bring about could be achieved.

The meeting was held against the background of growing fears in Pakistan that the Soviets were "digging in" all over Afghanistan. Zia said that he did not know whether they just wanted to stabilize the occupation or whether they were preparing to go "further South." I told him that I had information from U.N. development assistance experts in Afghanistan that civilian structures were being strengthened with young Afghans who had completed their studies in the Soviet Union. Zia made a long statement about the geopolitical implications of increased Soviet "predominance" in the region. He referred to the Soviets as "bullies" who wanted to force Pakistan into a position where it would be in conflict with everybody else and totally isolated.

The discussion then centered on my proposal to start considering the form of the settlement and specifically on the pros and cons of concluding a bilateral agreement on noninterference. Yaqub suggested—to force me, I think, to give the President a clearer explanation—that there was no difference between holding direct talks and concluding a bilateral agreement. I pointed out that there were significant differences. If Pakistan agreed to hold direct talks it did run the risk that such a concession might be wasted should no settlement be reached, but there was no risk in negotiating a bilateral agreement because Pakistan always reserved the right to sign it with somebody other than Karmal. Even if Zia agreed to sign the agreement with Karmal, there were many precedents for formal reservations on the question of recognition, for instance that which had been made by the United States when the Vietnam agreements were concluded.

I referred by name to Karmal because Zia had once again insisted that he could not agree to hold direct talks with him but had not ruled out such talks with others. He was willing to do business even with "a brother of Karmal," he repeated, and stressed that he had recognized the governments of Daoud and Taraki "because they had not taken over the government riding on a foreign tank." I emphasized that if he agreed to conclude a bilateral agreement I would make every effort to persuade the Soviets to change the man in Kabul.

When we discussed the possible replacement of Karmal, Zia mentioned that the chances of involving former King Zahir Shah in "some transitional arrangement" had improved but wondered "how much support he would have from the Soviet Union." Zia added that if the Soviets were willing to give the former king a role, they would be able to count on the support of many Afghans, the Islamic community, and even, perhaps, Iran. The resistance leaders considered the former king a symbol of an undesirable monarchy, he noted, but what mattered was "the opinion of the people inside Afghanistan who were shedding their blood." Zia felt that Zahir Shah needed a "green light" from the Soviet Union.

My meeting with the President was followed, as usual, by dinner, and in the ensuing conversation I felt that he had decided that it was worth trying the idea of a bilateral agreement. When we resumed our talks in the morning Yaqub told me that Zia had given him *"les grandes lignes"* of Pakistan's policy. I had convinced the President, he said, that the Soviet Union was undergoing a *"crise de conscience."* Pakistan was willing to send them a positive message.

Whenever Yaqub started to use French expressions—or when he referred to the Soviets as "Ruskies" and to the Americans as "Americanos"—I knew that he was in a good negotiating mood. I left Islamabad with a much improved and stronger text of a Note for the Record in which Pakistan, leaving aside the diplomatic niceties, accepted to conclude a bilateral agreement.

My discussions in Kabul were extremely difficult. Dost pretended to be unimpressed by Zia's willingness to conclude a bilateral agreement and refused to consider the idea of simultaneous negotiations on withdrawal with the Soviet Union. I was furious and showed it. I told him that it was extremely frustrating to obtain something that had been specifically requested only to be subsequently told that it was insufficient or unnecessary.

The diplomatic process was about to collapse. When Dost suggested that we could simply agree in the Note for the Record to hold another round of talks at Geneva I retorted that I was not willing to go all the way to South Asia and to fly back and forth between the capitals of Pakistan and Afghanistan for the sole purpose of convening a meeting. "For that I could have sent you a letter," I said before leaving his office.

The following day Dost told me, in what was becoming an established ritual, that we were, in fact, talking the same language. I accepted the inaccuracy of his statement because I knew that he had a most difficult job and because that was his way of changing his position. We then started an excruciating negotiation of the Note for the Record.

Dost seemed to understand that the Pakistanis were not ready to accept direct talks. The discussion therefore quickly focused on the paragraph that provided that concurrently with the preparation of a bilateral agreement on noninterference Kabul and the Soviets would formulate an agreement on withdrawal. The word "concurrently" seemed to irritate Dost, and we tried several revisions of the paragraph to avoid using it. We had friendly and angry exchanges, suspensions of the meetings to allow Dost to hold consultations, and very long hours waiting for replies. At one point Dost stopped talking to me and sent Sarwar Yuresh, one of his deputies, to my residence with several additional versions of the paragraph. The Afghans started once again to link any possible movement on withdrawal with Pakistani acceptance of direct talks. I kept sending Yuresh back to Dost with clear messages that I was willing to explore new textual suggestions, provided that the substance of the paragraph was not changed. I suspect that in that process dear Yuresh took a few liberties.

I went back to Islamabad with many suggestions for the text of the paragraph but without any clear indication of Kabul's willingness to accept simultaneity in the formulation of the agreements on noninterference and withdrawal. Yaqub accused the Soviets of having "ruthless, remorseless, and perverse" attitudes. But we again worked on a text that contained a more tenuous concept of simultaneity and gave additional hope to the Afghans that direct talks could be held down the road. I then notified the Afghans that I would be flying to Kabul for only a few hours because I was required to return to New York.

That Saturday, April 14, was to be both hectic and confusing. I left Islamabad early in the morning, and upon arrival in Kabul I was taken to the

residence at which I always stayed. Since I was not going to stay overnight I said that this was unnecessary but was told that those were the instructions of the Foreign Minister who would, in due course, let me know the time of our meeting. It was close to midday when our discussions started.

I was very direct. I told Dost that I thought I had understood his position and that in Pakistan I had made every effort to prepare a mutually acceptable text. The revised Note for the Record that I brought was the "bottom line" as far as Yaqub was concerned, and I earnestly hoped that he would accept it. Otherwise we would all have to concede that the negotiations had come to an end. Dost just listened and then suggested that I should return to the residence for lunch. He would inform me when he had concluded his consultations. He was very uptight and extremely tired. As we were walking down the corridor I pointed out that it would not be safe for my aircraft to take off at night.

When we resumed the discussions at 3:15 P.M. Dost told me that the revised text was not satisfactory. He asked me to clarify some of the changes and again said that the text required careful study by his Government. He would send a reply to New York through diplomatic channels. I was flabbergasted and told him that his suggestion was unacceptable if only because my return to New York without any agreed-upon conclusions would project a very negative image of the diplomatic process.

I requested a short suspension of the meeting during which I made some changes in the text that Yaqub had authorized. On the question of simultaneity the new text (which was probably the twenty-seventh revision of the original) provided that when the agreements were in the process of "being worked out" (by then we had agreed that in addition to the bilateral agreement on noninterference the settlement might include other legal "instruments"), Kabul and the Soviet Union would hold discussions concerning an agreement on withdrawal "to conform to the interrelationships defined in the comprehensive settlement." Pakistan had agreed to remove the word "concurrently" on condition that a reaffirmation of the package be retained. Dost again pretended to be unimpressed and told me that the main problem was that the possibility of holding direct talks remained uncertain. He repeated that his Government needed time to consider the paper and that a reply would be sent to New York.

I said that the circumstances in which I had conducted the consultations in the area were such that if I left empty-handed the process could be severely eroded. I would return to the residence to enable him to discuss the draft with his superiors and would expect a reply before my departure.

At the residence my colleagues noticed that even the pistachio nuts that were usually available at virtually every table had been removed. Obviously we were no longer wanted. But Bashir-sahib, the charming butler who looked like Anthony Quinn, prepared tea, and we settled down for what we knew would be a long wait. Captain Freund had said that we could make a safe takeoff until around six in the evening. But that hour came and passed without any news. It was not before seven that Yuresh came and then only to say that the Government would send a reply through the permanent mission in New York "in two or three days."

The fact that Yuresh came to deliver the message indicated that there were serious problems. Either the leadership was deeply divided or new instructions from Moscow had not arrived. Presumably Dost had refused to see me again or had been prevented from doing so. There was nothing I could usefully say or do.

I must admit that I was scared when we took off at 8:30 P.M. Knowing all the precautions that were taken when we landed and took off in the light of day—including throwing phosphorus flares to divert heat-seeking missiles from the engines of the aircraft—I was aware that we were taking a serious risk. At the same time I had absolute confidence in our experienced Swiss pilot. After taking off he climbed masterfully, circling over the airport to a very high altitude, and only then did we proceeded to Islamabad.

At the airport I held a meeting with Yaqub that lasted more than an hour. I explained the situation, and he understood. I told him that I was confident that we would receive a positive reply. I said that blaming Afghanistan publicly for the delay might be counterproductive, and I therefore asked him to authorize me to tell the press that I expected to receive a reply "from the two governments" within a few days. "Grand!" he exclaimed, and we said good-bye.

IV

On my way back, on Sunday, April 15, I made a stopover in Teheran to brief Iranian senior officials at the airport. I then proceeded to Geneva and New York to endure what I subsequently called "the long wait" for the Afghan reply. I did not expect it to arrive "in two or three days," as I had been told, but I never imagined that so many weeks would elapse before it arrived.

On April 23 Farid Zarif, Kabul's permanent representative in New York, came to my office and without even mentioning a possible reply complained that the Commission on Human Rights had appointed a special rapporteur to investigate human rights violations in Afghanistan. When I asked him if Dost had sent a reply, I think he was sincere when he said that he did not know anything about my talks in Kabul. I pointed out very forcefully how important it was to get an answer immediately. As soon as he left I also sent a cable to the U.N. representative in Kabul instructing him urgently to approach the Foreign Minister. He was not allowed to see Dost.

The following day I left New York to participate in a seminar of Asian journalists in Shanghai. On my way there I spent a couple of days in California with my son Diego, who was studying at Stanford. While in Shanghai I had interesting conversations with Mushahid Hussain, the editor of *The Muslim* of Islamabad, who kept saying that Zia was not interested in a settlement because the Afghan conflict had strengthened his regime.

I received an invitation to visit Beijing for consultations with Deputy Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who was conducting regular discussions with Leonid Ilyichev, his Soviet opposite number. During our formal discussion, in the course of a wide-ranging discussion, when interpreters and note-takers were

present, Qian Qichen told me that Ilyichev had not given him any indication that the Soviets were willing or trying to withdraw from Afghanistan.

When he escorted me to the door of the Foreign Ministry, however, he told me earnestly, in English, that I should persist in my efforts. "I am convinced that if the Soviets decide to withdraw they will negotiate a settlement through you," he said, holding my arm in a gesture of sincerity. I met him many times afterwards in New York and elsewhere, and I always reminded him of what he had told me that Monday morning in Beijing and how much the intensity of his message had impressed me. The last time I did so was in Quito, when he paid an official visit to my country at my invitation in 1989. We had each been appointed foreign minister of our respective government almost simultaneously, and he had promised me that he would visit Ecuador on his first trip abroad.

I returned to New York on May 8 and immediately called in Shustov and Zarif to demand a reply from Kabul. Both were noncommittal, but the following day Zarif did produce a letter from Dost. The draft Note for the Record had been carefully studied, said Dost, but "we" still find that it is "at parts ambiguous and equivocal." (I knew that when Dost said "we" he was following strict instructions from the "leadership.") The letter pointed out that "we" had never considered the withdrawal as an element of the settlement and that the negotiations on withdrawal between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union would start when substantial progress had been made "in the direct talks." He suggested that the Note simply say that during my trip to the area it had been agreed to hold another round of talks at Geneva.

I was angry and threatened Shustov and Zarif with a public statement saying that Afghanistan had rejected a package of understandings that Pakistan had accepted on the spot. There had been, I said, several "leaks" that Pakistan had accepted my proposals but that a Kabul reply was outstanding.[5] Was it in Kabul's interest to confirm this? I told them that I would, for the last time, write a letter to Dost, couched in very strong terms, asking the Kabul "leadership" to reconsider its attitude.

As had so often happened before, Dost reversed his position. On June 12 I sent the approved text of the Note for the Record—which was dated April 19!—and informed my interlocutors that the next round of negotiations would be held at Geneva August 24–30. Shustov told me that the Soviets had been consistently pressing the Kabul leadership to respond positively.

V

At the beginning of the negotiations I had decided that I would always pretend to overlook or ignore "the situation on the ground," which Stalin had aptly described as "concrete political questions." I was not, of course, unaware of the significance of military developments, nor, indeed, of the fact that I would be running the risk of being considered unrealistic or "naive," which is a diplomatic expression designed to avoid the term *stupid.* A number of accommodations in the negotiations were dictated by changing conditions on the ground, but I

consistently refused explicitly to adjust the diplomatic process to military strategies adopted by one side or the other. I was convinced that to do so could have the effect of allowing the manipulation of the negotiations, which could consequently be undermined and even paralyzed.

Toward the middle of 1984 it became difficult, however, not to acknowledge that the slow pace of the diplomatic process had coincided with an intensification of Soviet military operations in Afghanistan.

The *New York Times* asserted in an editorial that the Soviet Union was "ripping Afghanistan apart,"[6] and when two Afghan aircraft bombed a small village in Waziristan, the Soviets also seemed to be "putting the squeeze on Pakistan." It was frequently recalled, to emphasize the contrast between Andropov and Chernenko, that during Andropov's funeral Chernenko had pointedly ignored Zia's two formal requests for an appointment. Chernenko, it was said, was not interested in a Soviet withdrawal "because, despite the conventional wisdom that has coalesced in the West, the new Soviet leadership does not believe that its Army is bogged down in Afghanistan."[7] There was a growing impression that the Soviets were therefore trying a new strategy that placed more emphasis on the ground than on the negotiating table. *"Le style Tchernenko," Le Monde* of Paris called it.

Shortly after Pérez de Cuéllar and I arrived in Moscow on July 11, I realized that Chernenko's was an old and tired leadership. In many respects it was also bitter. During a meeting with Gromyko, who seemed to exercise enormous authority and influence, he blamed the U.S. Government for all the problems that the world was facing. Soviet officials claimed that the Foreign Minister, who was portrayed as a consistent advocate of détente, was deeply frustrated by President Reagan's negative attitude toward the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Army, Soviet friends told me, had been given a free hand to hit the *mujahideen* much harder, and Pakistan's willingness to continue the Geneva process was seen as a direct result of the harsh treatment that it was receiving. In our discussions Gromyko brushed aside Pakistan's disposition to conclude a bilateral agreement on noninterference and left no doubt that his conversation with Yaqub in June 1983 had inflicted serious damage on the U.N. process.

Chernenko repeated the well-known party line that if it was possible to stop American and Pakistani interference the withdrawal of Soviet troops would pose no problem, which in the circumstances I took as a positive indication that, at least formally, the basic policy outlined by Andropov remained unchanged. I urged the immediate appointment of a replacement for Gavrilov, but I did not receive a straight answer. I left Moscow with the confirmed impression that there was in the Soviet Union a moribund regime.

Before leaving New York I had made arrangements to visit North and South Korea, as well as China and Japan, after my trip to Moscow. The Korean peninsula was another conflict area within my purview. I accordingly made the long Aeroflot flight, almost ten hours long, from Moscow to Pyongyang during the night of July 14–15. My stay in Pyongyang was, to say the least, full of perplexing impressions about that isolated country's regime and way of life.

On July 20 I flew in a Chinese airliner to Beijing and was told on arrival that Yaqub was in town. In fact he was staying in a guest house located very near to the one assigned to me in the Diaoyutai diplomatic compound. I immediately called him and we met at "his place" on Sunday, July 22.

Yaqub was accompanied by Abdul Sattar, a senior Additional Secretary who was not a member of the delegation that assisted Yaqub at the Geneva negotiations. Many Pakistani friends had told me that this was regrettable. I briefed them on the Moscow discussions. The Soviet gerontocracy, I said, was not capable of adopting bold political decisions but seemed willing to pursue the basic policies advocated by Andropov.

I added that there was, in my view, a serious problem that Yaqub should be aware of: The famous Moscow meeting in May 1983 had eroded his credibility. Pakistan, I suggested, should therefore reaffirm its willingness to conclude a bilateral agreement on noninterference. Yaqub made some remarks about Soviet imperialistic tendencies and promised to consult Zia. It was becoming extremely difficult for Pakistan, he said, to make concessions without any indication from the other side regarding withdrawal.

I also checked my Moscow notes and impressions with my friend Qian Qichen. Relations between China and the Soviet Union had deteriorated when the Soviets postponed, with twenty-four hours' notice, the visit to Beijing of First Deputy Premier Ivan Arkhipov, who would have been the highest ranking Soviet official to go to China in fifteen years. This was considered a rebuff, coming after Reagan's trip to China and Chinese-Vietnam border clashes. But Qian Qichen had traveled to Moscow in July for discussions with Gromyko and assured me that the Soviets had not abandoned the idea of a negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict.

Back in New York I reiterated to Ambassador Troyanovsky my request that either Safronchuk or a permanent successor to Gavrilov be in Geneva during the next round of negotiations. As far as I was concerned, I told them, that would be a good indication of the Soviet Union's continuing support of the U.N. process. I then flew to Quito to represent the United Nations at the inauguration of President Leon Febres Cordero.

Shortly after I returned from my country I held my first formal meeting with Michael Armacost, the successor to Eagleburger, who invited me for lunch at the State Department on August 16. He essentially heard what I had to say, which was not much. Armacost was still trying to find his way in his new job but seemed interested in the Geneva negotiations. He said he wanted to establish with me the good working relations that his predecessor and I had maintained.

I went to Geneva via Salzburg because I had been asked to participate in an International Seminar for Diplomats. I was frankly much more interested in a parallel invitation that I had received from my friend Albert Rohan, an able Austrian diplomat who had served for some time at the U.N. as Waldheim's assistant, to attend the Salzburg Music Festival. It was a most enjoyable intermission for somebody who spent his life discussing international conflicts and disputes. The ticket for the performance (it was *The Magic Flute*) pointed out

that one was expected "to dress in keeping with the festive character of the occasion," and, indeed, all the ladies had taken out their most elegant garments and the men were wearing black tie. The stage, the music, and the acting were splendid.

On August 22 I landed in Geneva. The round of negotiations was supposed to take place over a period of seven working days, including the preliminary private meetings that had become an established practice.

Yaqub reiterated Pakistan's willingness to conclude a bilateral agreement on noninterference provided that the status of the document on withdrawal was also agreed upon. We therefore spent four of those seven days discussing the legal status of that document. During the next two days we superficially touched upon various subjects, including the consultative mechanism for the refugees and the text on guarantees, and on the seventh day we adjourned the discussions. The interlocutors did agree on one thing: to hold another round of talks in February 1985.

Raymond Sommereyns and I had prepared a draft bilateral agreement on noninterference containing the relevant provisions of the single text, which the interlocutors had agreed not to change. We added only a preamble that was more or less standard for that kind of agreement. We had prepared a second document, titled "Revised draft text of the comprehensive settlement," that was intended to serve as the "mother document" that Gavrilov had suggested. By its terms, however, the Soviets and the Afghans would be required to accept—in a formal, binding instrument—that the withdrawal was an integral element of the settlement.

Dost and his advisers were extremely unhappy, and their annoyance increased when Yaqub took the position that he was ready to accept the text of the first document if Afghanistan was equally ready to accept that the second document would have identical legal status. Dost argued again and again and again that the "mother document" that Gavrilov had advocated was supposed to have a political, not a legal, character and that it should mention the withdrawal only in the sense that Afghanistan and the Soviet Union would conclude a separate agreement.

Although the discussions were inconclusive, the new proximity format proved extremely useful for accelerating the pace of the negotiations. I no longer had to resort to the Geneva version of shuttle diplomacy. Cathy started to keep a record of the number of "crossings" that I had made from the room where the Afghans were seated to the room of the Pakistanis. She would log, for instance, "third session, five crossings." A more irreverent colleague, Wilma Gibson, told a press correspondent who had written that I was "shuttling" between two rooms that I was, in fact, "shuffling" between the Afghans and the Pakistanis. Now that the two delegations were in the same building, she kept wondering what would happen if an Afghan and a Pakistani found themselves together in the men's room!

When the round was adjourned I told a press conference that the interlocutors had conducted discussions of an essentially technical nature. That was, of course, true, but it was equally obvious that Kabul remained as reluctant as ever

to move on the question of withdrawal. I had no way of knowing the Soviet position because nobody came from Moscow.

I was not, however, altogether unhappy. I had managed to start the implementation of my strategy of shifting the discussions to the consideration of the definitive structure, form, and status of the settlement. That would create increasing pressures to adopt the very difficult political decisions required. It would also have the effect of isolating the time frame for withdrawal as the only outstanding issue. That was the only way, I was convinced, to force the Soviet leadership to resolve the conflict within it, perhaps under Chernenko but rather more likely under a stronger and more vital successor.

VI

As the 1984 General Assembly approached, a review of the year's developments and consultations with well-informed governments officials, analysts, and press correspondents indicated that I had to contend with an additional, complicating factor. There seemed to be sharp differences of policy and negotiating tactics between the United States and Pakistan, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and the Kabul leadership, on the other.

Pakistani friends assured me that Zia's decision, following the long discussion we had in Islamabad, to accept a bilateral agreement on noninterference had been taken without consulting the United States, which had expressed strong reservations. I was told that Yaqub had implemented at Geneva the President's decision even after Pakistan had been informed of U.S. unhappiness. "In this instance the tail wags the dog," a senior Pakistani official said, "and we intend to continue doing so because we need a settlement."

My Soviet friends had openly admitted in Moscow that there were serious difficulties with Kabul, but their Government was in such a state of lethargy that they had barely managed to convince the Afghan leadership to send a positive reply and thus allow the negotiations to continue. Soviet absence at Geneva constituted a very clear indication of Moscow's paralysis. When I came back from Geneva Shustov seemed too embarrassed to see me and avoided a meeting for some time. A Mr. Khalevinskiy came to my office in September to be briefed about the August round, but I did not see Shustov until I went to a reception at the Soviet Mission to the U.N. to celebrate the Great October Revolution. He then did not even try to explain but with a wide smile on his face introduced me to Nikolai Kozirev, "who has been appointed to replace Stan Gavrilov." Kozirev was in New York to attend the General Assembly's debate on Afghanistan. The three of us had lunch a few days later, but the Soviet officials were not informative, let alone optimistic.

When I briefed the members of the European Community, both before and after Geneva, I had the impression that they all felt that my efforts were wasted. In many different ways they said that the international situation was so tense, and the Soviet leadership so weak, that it was illusory to expect any movement towards a political solution.

I therefore felt quite disappointed and frustrated. "Those were the days when you were a very lonely man with a 'draft agreement' in a world dominated by cynics," a friend said in a letter not long ago. My only source of comfort was Yaqub, who throughout the year had seemed determined to keep trying and had consistently supported the strategy that I had mapped out early on in Casablanca. When he came to New York for the General Assembly he and Begum Yaqub Khan invited María Teresa and me to dinner. Yaqub said that we were having serious difficulties but that things were bound to change and that we were laying solid foundations for a settlement. He told me that he and Gromyko had had a very good meeting in New York.

In the Secretary General's 1984 report to the General Assembly on Afghanistan no effort was made to evaluate the year's developments. It was unusually brief and contained only a factual account of my trip to the area and of the Geneva proximity discussions, without disclosing their contents. "The interlocutors indicated that the discussions had proved to be useful," the report noted.[8]

Opening the debate in the Assembly, Yaqub said that the U.N. process continued "to hold out the hope and the promise that recourse to patient diplomacy and adherence to recognized principles will bring the tragedy of Afghanistan to an end." He pointed out that a settlement was regarded by Pakistan "as imperative." Troyanovsky said that "this year the counterrevolution has been dealt a series of major defeats" and stressed that "some" wanted to depict the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan as a "threat" to Pakistan to justify the supply to Pakistan of "the latest type of American weaponry."

The Pakistani vote-getting machine was able to win a record 119 votes in favor of the resolution again condemning the Soviet invasion. There were 20 votes against and 14 abstentions. It was the sixth time that the Assembly had adopted the same resolution on Afghanistan. Shahnawaz and his boys were delirious![9]

Before leaving for my annual midwinter winter vacation in Florida I wrote a long letter to my interlocutors. Recalling that both had insisted, at the end of the August round, that we schedule another round for February 1985, I said that my main concern was that they then be able to embark on a concrete discussion of specific texts. In practical terms, that meant reaching agreement on the formal character of all the legal instruments that would comprise the settlement.

VII

Upon my return from my vacation on January 11, 1985, Cathy told me that a very nervous Ambassador Shahnawaz needed to talk to me urgently. Unusually ceremonious when he walked into my office, Shahnawaz told me in very formal terms that his Government had instructed him to request a postponement of the round of negotiations scheduled for February because elections were to be held in Pakistan on February 25 and 28 (national and provincial) and sometime in the

middle of March (Senate). His Government suggested that the Geneva negotiations be resumed at the end of April.

In taking note of the request I stressed the dangers of an extended period of diplomatic inactivity at a time when the process was seriously deadlocked. But realizing that a postponement was inevitable, I suggested that some kind of interim consultations be held in order to give at least an impression of movement. I emphasized that it would be regrettable and damaging to the diplomatic process to let eight months elapse between meetings. Shahnawaz did not like the idea of a brief session in February. I then proposed a meeting in New York or in some other U.N. headquarters, such as Vienna, with the two foreign ministers. He promised to consult Yaqub, who coincidentally would be in New York for medical reasons.

When I informed Zarif of the Pakistani request, he first said that an April round was unacceptable. (April was always a problem for the Afghans because of the Revolution anniversary celebrations.) He also rejected the idea of consultations as an interim arrangement and insisted that there was no "valid" reason to change the date decided upon when the August round was adjourned. The two Ambassadors seemed to have decided to behave in childish fashion and to complicate every effort I was making to protect the image of the process.

I then received an invitation to lunch from Yaqub, who said that a "lame-duck" administration would not be able to negotiate in earnest. I told him that the Soviets and the Afghans did not take the Pakistani elections too seriously and were arguing that the United States was again trying to undermine the diplomatic process. He accepted the idea of holding consultations with me in New York, provided that Dost came for the same purpose or agreed to meet with me at Geneva. Dost rejected this arrangement but accepted that the negotiations be postponed. I therefore announced that the negotiations had been postponed until May. The exchanges had undoubtedly left a bitter taste.

At the end of February Armacost called to say that he wanted to have a chat before a trip to Asia that was to include a visit to Islamabad. I told him that although a May round had been announced I felt that it should not be held unless I believed that some progress could be achieved. I might therefore travel to the area with the idea of ascertaining whether the Afghans were prepared to be forthcoming on the questions that had been raised at the last round. I also wanted to determine the attitude of the Pakistanis after the election period, which had evidently been quite traumatic.

Armacost told me that at a recent meeting in Vienna between Assistant Secretary Richard Murphy and his Soviet opposite number, Vladimir Polyakov, it had not been possible to find out if Moscow was willing to move. He expressed the view that for a number of reasons it was "appropriate, timely, and salutary" to focus on the withdrawal. I said that I had reached the conclusion that the time frame for withdrawal would be given only at the end but that I was anxious to move toward a situation in which the Soviets would be forced to disclose it. I told Armacost that a new Soviet negotiator had been appointed but that he had said nothing.

Georgi Arbatov, the influential adviser of many Kremlin leaders, chose a

particularly amusing way of avoiding saying anything. We were both in Athens attending a disarmament seminar at the invitation of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou. After several failed attempts, I had managed to start a conversation with him about the Afghan conflict. We were seating comfortably at a reception and I was explaining the rather lamentable state of the negotiations when suddenly he interrupted me to say: "Look, that is Melina Mercouri. Let us go and say hello to her." End of conversation.

Scanning the press, which was my main source of information at the time, I gathered that there had been significant increases of U.S. covert aid to the *mujahideen.* A long article in the *Washington Post* by Bob Woodward and Charles Babcock indicated that the CIA's aid to the Afghan resistance had "mushroomed into the largest U.S. covert operation since the Vietnam war."[10] That, in turn, according to a report from Peshawar by William Claiborne, also published in the *Post,* had triggered bitter feuding among the Afghan guerrilla groups.[11] There were many comments about aid "diversions" by middlemen, to such an extent that the Peshawar leaders were claiming that they were receiving only a fraction of aid flows. "They accuse each other, the Pakistan Government, and even the Afghan exiles engaged by the CIA of siphoning off many of the weapons and either stockpiling them or selling them for personal gain," said the *Sunday Times* of London.[12]

A number of press commentaries in Pakistan and in the United States expressed concern that these reports could negatively affect the U.N. diplomatic endeavors. *The Muslim* said in an editorial: "It will be tragic if all the pains taken by the U.N. negotiator in the course of the past three years are allowed to go waste or overtaken by new events or new superpower global considerations." *The Muslim* added that it was necessary to sound this warning "because in the meantime certain forces have been active, particularly in the United States, to belittle or bypass the U.N. peace process and reactivate political maneuvers." *Dawn* of Karachi noted that "[a]ll this has serious implications for Pakistan's security, political stability, economic progress, national cohesion, and social harmony." The *Christian Science Monitor* pointed out that "[a]lthough the U.N. efforts . . . have achieved no tangible results so far . . . [i]t is to be hoped that the American people will urge the Government to support these efforts by Mr. Cordovez as a first step toward reaching a political settlement."[13]

Such was the atmosphere that surrounded the Geneva process when Konstantin Chernenko died on March 10, 1985. Within a few hours it was announced that Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev had been appointed as the new leader of the Kremlin. The appointment was so swift that Pravda was forced to print Gorbachev's photograph on page one and Chernenko's on page two. Gorbachev projected from the beginning an image of vitality and remarkable self-confidence, but nobody imagined at the time the revolutionary changes that he was shortly to bring about and the impact that he was to have on world affairs. At the time I was only hoping that his appointment would mark the end of what I had begun to call the "long winter" of the diplomatic process.

The first signals that Gorbachev sent during a meeting with President Zia were the subject of diverse interpretations. The fifty-minute meeting took place

in Moscow after Chernenko's funeral. "I was impressed by the dynamism, energy, and clarity of thought of the new Soviet leader," Zia told the press on his return to Islamabad. "I was reassured by his assertion that the Soviet Union was committed to supporting a political solution under the auspices of the U.N.-sponsored indirect talks." But a report on the meeting by Tass indicated that the meeting had not been all sweetness and light. It said that Gorbachev gave Zia "a frank, principled assessment of the policy conducted by the Pakistan Government," which the report characterized as involving "aggressive actions" that the Soviet Union considered "cannot but affect in the most negative way Soviet-Pakistani relations." According to *Time* magazine, "Zia was said to have been shaken by the conversation."[14]

At the same time, Christopher Thomas, the Washington correspondent of the *Times* of London, reported that the United States expected that Gorbachev would make "some cautious negotiating probes over Afghanistan in the near future, possibly to put life back into the deadlocked United Nations–sponsored peace talks."[15]

Armacost pressed me to convene a new round of negotiations but I told him that I had decided first to find out if there was in the Soviet Government renewed interest in a political settlement. At that point the only way to know was to talk to Kozirev in Kabul. If he had nothing to say it would be futile to hold another round of negotiations.

I arrived in Islamabad on May 25 and held a long meeting with Yaqub. He was now a Senator as well as Foreign Minister. He seemed determined to pursue the approach that we had discussed but repeated that there should be "parity" in the status of the documents on noninterference and withdrawal. I told him that I was there to seek an understanding concerning the status not only of two but of all the documents. Otherwise, another round would be wasted.

Yaqub said that progress in the negotiations could "set the stage for an easing of tensions between East and West." Pakistan, he added, had some experience with the Soviets and consequently "had some anxiety about their methods." He added that "one could be too weak to be reasonable." A friend subsequently told me that such remarks were prompted by increased hostile actions and ruthless procedures by the Soviets. When some Soviet soldiers had been arrested inside Pakistani territory a Soviet Commandant had arrived in an armored personnel carrier (APC) and in perfect English had demanded the return of his men. This was done forthwith. All the Soviets then boarded the APC and went back to Afghanistan.

I realized that there was no change of attitude in Pakistan, which was the sole purpose of my going first to Islamabad. "We only need a little signal from the other side," Shaharyar told me. "I need a big signal," I said, "because there has been a very protracted stalemate which is killing the process." Deane Hinton, the new U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, talked at length about how the elections had increased Zia's political strength.

Zia, as always, invited me to dinner. I told him that I had come to the area to establish the "rules of engagement" for a possible resumption of the negotiations. Zia gave me an account of his meeting with Gorbachev, which he described as

both positive and tense. "We agreed on one basic thing: We must support your efforts because only a negotiated solution is possible," he said. Zia also told me that the refugee leaders had been able to unite in a single organization or alliance but that they had not been able to select a leader or to agree on a rotation procedure for that purpose. At Zia's request I also called on the recently elected Prime Minister, Muhammed Khan Junejo, who told me that the Government would now be required to keep Parliament informed about the diplomatic process.

Shortly after my arrival in Kabul on May 28, I held my first meeting with Dost. We spent most of the time talking about a "White Book" that the Afghan Government had published containing details of interference operations by Pakistan and the United States. Anticipating a long speech by Dost, which was part of the ritual on each of my visits, I gave him a copy of a chart that my staff had prepared to show that all the actions alleged in the "White Book" would be covered by provisions of the draft on noninterference.

Dost also made some derogatory remarks about the elections in Pakistan, which in his view remained under an illegitimate dictatorship even if it now had "a so-called parliament." The only interesting outcome of the election, he added, was that during the campaign, and subsequently in the so-called parliament, it had been repeatedly requested that Pakistan hold direct talks with Afghanistan. Deane Hinton, the American Ambassador in Pakistan, had rejected such requests, he noted in a sarcastic tone, "although they were not addressed to him."

I told Dost that Pakistan remained willing to proceed to a definition of the status of the various documents that would be included in the settlement. A most difficult discussion ensued in which he again tried to exclude the withdrawal and to question all my attempts to preserve the package deal that had been accepted at the beginning of the process. I threatened not to hold further negotiations unless we reached an understanding concerning all the documents.

Kozirev then came to see me at the residence, and after a brief conversation about the excellence of Afghan carpets he suggested that we take a walk in the garden. He then told me that Gorbachev was determined to reach a settlement under U.N. auspices. The direction in which I had been trying to move was the right one, he went on, and I should indeed return to New York with a clear understanding about the documentation that would contain the settlement.

Kozirev proposed that the settlement consist of a "set of instruments" comprising a bilateral agreement on interference, a bilateral agreement on refugees, an instrument or instruments on guarantees, and an instrument on "interrelationships," including the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. The instruments on noninterference, refugees, and guarantees should be formulated first, he said, and, immediately after, the instrument on interrelationships.

I asked him a number of questions. "Yes, yes, package, package," he exclaimed impatiently when I stressed that the "set of instruments" should conform to the understandings reached at the beginning of the process. I also asked him many questions about the contents and the legal status of the instrument on interrelationships. He first attempted to answer my questions one by one but then said: "Look, the Pakistanis will not have to sign anything until they are

fully satisfied with the format, status, and contents of the instrument on interrelationships. So why should they worry? Why don't we just start working, and you will see that everything will be settled."

Kozirev and I agreed that we would work very closely in the search for solutions to the problems that would undoubtedly arise, and I felt that I would get along well with him. I liked his style and personality. Kozirev seemed overwhelmed by the significance of the message that he had been asked to deliver. The anxiety in his face indicated clearly that his new leader was ready to play.

Dost had obviously been given the same message because he produced a paper containing essentially what Kozirev had told me. I took Dost's paper as a "proposal" and prepared my own, "official" draft. Dost strongly resisted a couple of "precisions" that I had added to satisfy Pakistani concerns. I had agreed with Kozirev's reasoning, but I did not know if the Pakistanis would do likewise. In connection with the bilateral agreements, I therefore added "to be signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan" and also included a sentence that read: "All instruments will have equally binding character."

We spent two whole days discussing the "precisions" that I had included in the paper. Dost was most annoyed. I felt very sorry for him because I knew that he was under enormous pressure. I pressed him extremely hard, not because I felt that such details were essential but mainly because I wanted to be sure that "the leadership" had not devised a method to circumvent the withdrawal issue. This time I refused to go back to the residence whenever Dost said that he needed to consult the "authorities"; I said that I would wait in his conference room until their consultations were concluded. One afternoon we had three or four interruptions for consultations. The one thing that amazed me was that Dost had not raised the question of "direct talks," but I did not think it wise to say anything.

About one hour before my departure I told Dost that I would be willing to drop the idea of the paper if we were in agreement on the essential points. (I felt that it was preferable not to have a paper because I dreaded the Pakistanis when they started to examine a text.) I then repeated what Kozirev had said, emphasizing that Pakistan would not be obliged to accept anything unless it approved all the instruments. I told Dost that I hoped that the Pakistanis would agree and that we would accordingly be able to hold another round of negotiations. I also asked Dost to please understand why I had to be so demanding.

Upon landing in Islamabad at about 7:00 P.M. I was driven directly to the Foreign Ministry for a meeting with Yaqub and his delegation. I told them the terms of my understanding with Kozirev and Dost, and it was immediately accepted. I then invited them to dinner. My hotel suite being temporarily U.N. territory, drinks were served by my British Security Officer. At one point I invited Yaqub and Naik to have a private conversation in my bedroom and told them that the proposal about the "set of instruments" had come straight from Gorbachev. In my opinion it "reconstituted" the package in unmistakable terms and was entirely consistent with my strategy of "painting the withdrawal into a corner." "I think," I added, "that we have now started an entirely different stage in the negotiations."

V

1985–1986

GORBACHEV: PREPARING THE GROUND FOR DISENGAGEMENT

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8

"BLEEDERS," "DEALERS," AND *PERESTROIKA*

Selig S. Harrison

Mikhail Gorbachev was skeptical from the very beginning about Leonid Brezhnev's Afghan adventure. In 1980, it will be recalled, he objected to stepped-up defense spending for the war at the expense of domestic economic needs. Visiting Canada in 1983, he told his official host, Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan, that the war was "a mistake."[1] It was not surprising, therefore, that Gorbachev ordered a secret Politburo reappraisal of Afghan policy in April 1985, only a month after he took power upon the death of Konstantin Chernenko. "The Politburo conducted a hard and impartial analysis of the situation," he recalled later. "We started even at that time to seek a way out."[2]

Gorbachev carefully prepared the ground for disengagement during 1985 and 1986. As he consolidated his power, his pursuit of a negotiated settlement became progressively more determined. Initially, however, confronted by hardline opponents in the Politburo who still believed in a military victory, Gorbachev coupled his diplomatic initiatives with a policy of limited military escalation. "From the very beginning, he knew he wanted to get out," said Aleksandr Yakovlev, his principal foreign policy adviser. "But the military-industrial complex pressed him to try this, try that. They were getting many benefits from the war. He let them do some of the things they wanted to do, but it's not true, as some have said, that he himself wanted to try for a military decision."[3]

As veteran Moscow correspondent Edmund Stevens reported, while Gorbachev wanted to push the U.N. negotiations, the Defense Ministry and leading generals insisted that the war could be won within two years if they were given more tactical freedom and more troops. What the generals demanded, in particular, was "a big increase in Soviet military efforts to seal off Afghanistan's eastern border,"[4] including the use of direct pressure against Pakistan if necessary.

Gorbachev gave the armed forces a green light to proceed with a series of ambitious offensives that began in late May with the largest assault ever made against resistance bases in the Kunar valley, a key resistance staging area near the Pakistani border. He also agreed to upgrade the level of Soviet military leadership in Afghanistan. One of the Red Army's most celebrated heroes, General Mikhail Zaitsev, then serving as commander of Soviet forces in Germany, was transferred to the Afghan front. Significantly, though, while Zaitsev had a free hand to try more aggressive tactics, Gorbachev did not authorize sending more troops, with the exception of several thousand additional *spetznaz* forces. Moreover, he accompanied the policy of carefully calibrated escalation during 1985 and 1986 with growing diplomatic flexibility designed to test American readiness for a settlement.

The policy struggles between hawks and doves in Moscow during the first two years of the Gorbachev regime were paralleled by equally bitter conflicts in Washington. "Bleeders" who wanted to upgrade the level of U.S. weaponry and to keep Soviet forces pinned down for as long as possible struggled against "dealers" who were prepared to facilitate a Soviet withdrawal as part of a broader improvement in American-Soviet relations.

The "bleeders," completely dismissing the possibility of a withdrawal, focused solely on the Soviet shift to a bolder military strategy. The CIA had recruited agents in the Soviet Defense Ministry who fed Washington detailed information on the plans for escalation associated with General Zaitsev's transfer.[5] This intelligence breakthrough speeded up implementation of National Security Decision Directive 166, signed by Reagan in March 1985, with its plans for more and better weaponry. In contrast to its successful penetration of the Soviet military apparatus, however, the CIA was conspicuously insensitive to the fact that Gorbachev and the men around him were at odds with the armed forces and wanted to make radical changes in foreign and defense policies. In a conversation on July 10, 1985, Michael Barry, then Director of the South Asia Analysis Branch at the CIA, discounted the significance of the newly conciliatory approach taken by Gorbachev toward the U.N. negotiations on Afghanistan. He brushed aside my view that Gorbachev had reluctantly gone along with a temporary escalation and would move rapidly toward a settlement as he consolidated his hold on the Politburo. Gorbachev still hoped to win the war, Barry argued, through more effective military and political tactics.

The CIA disregarded intelligence information that contradicted this assessment, according to Morton I. Abramowitz, who was the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research in 1985. "When Gorbachev came in," Abramowitz recalled, "the plans for escalation were already made. He wasn't going to reverse the military at that point. It was like Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs. We got reports that gradually made clear he had differences with the military and was taking a new look at the situation, but the agency discounted them. They had it all wrong from the very beginning about what was happening under Gorbachev."[6]

In my conversations at the State Department in 1985, I found a cautiously hopeful attitude toward Gorbachev and a desire to test his intentions. On July

13 Arnold Raphel, Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs, told me that "we will have to respond much more positively" to the newly flexible Soviet posture toward the U.N. negotiations. "If we don't," he said, "we will find ourselves on the defensive diplomatically, and they're the ones who should be on the defensive. They're the aggressors, after all."

Measured against the rigidity of the Soviet posture during the Chernenko period, the immediate turnabout on Afghanistan that accompanied Gorbachev's assumption of power was indeed striking. Moscow itself had proposed a new format for the settlement. In place of the long-standing Soviet position that the withdrawal could be covered only in a Moscow-Kabul agreement, the new format directly linked such an agreement with the other parts of the settlement. This linkage meant that the Soviet Union would be clearly committed to fulfillment of the projected withdrawal timetable. Equally important, after years of hedging on whether it would join the United States as a guarantor, Moscow had abruptly changed its attitude. As Chapter 9 shows, Kabul, with Soviet approval, agreed at the June round of the Geneva negotiations that Cordovez could submit the U.N. draft of the guarantee clause to the superpowers. Soon afterward, Moscow conditionally accepted the draft with minor amendments, in contrast to the studied silence and the evasiveness of the United States.

Except for Raphel, few, if any, U.S. officials were sharply focused on the U.N. mediation effort and grasped the significance of the new Soviet posture. Gorbachev had signaled his readiness for serious negotiations more than a year before the first deployments of the Stinger missiles that are so often credited with bringing him to the bargaining table.

A Victory for the "Dealers"

The prospect of Soviet acceptance of the proposed guarantee clause touched off an intense internal controversy in the Reagan Administration over how the United States should respond. Until then, the United States had confined itself to generalized expressions of support for the "U.N. process." Now, for the first time, the U.N. was pressing the United States to formalize its approval of the U.N. approach to a settlement and of the draft text then emerging. To be sure, Washington would not be formally committed to the text until the precise terms of the withdrawal and other key provisions were agreed upon. But both the "bleeders" and the "dealers" recognized that superpower agreement on the guarantee issue would mark a quantum leap in the U.N. negotiations. To the "bleeders," the U.N. approach was inherently repugnant, given its acceptance of the Kabul regime as Pakistan's negotiating partner and its formula for a cutoff of arms aid. Thus, the mere hint of a U.S. commitment to guarantee the settlement was a call to battle.

Responding to pressures from Cordovez, Raphel wanted to register formal U.S. acceptance of the guarantee clause in time for the sixth round of the U.N. negotiations in late August. But Michael Armacost, Undersecretary of State for

Political Affairs, repeatedly postponed a decision, fearful of stirring up controversy. It was not until August 23, four days before the scheduled start of the Geneva discussions, that Raphel received approval for a compromise plan to convey conditional oral approval "in principle." Stephen Sestanovich, one of those handling Afghanistan policy in the National Security Council, said that "there was a conscious decision that it would be best not to get tied down to a specific text."[7] Charles Dunbar, Coordinator of Afghan Affairs in the State Department, then on vacation in Maine, rushed to New York to see Cordovez. "I told him," Dunbar recalled,

> that it was difficult to talk about the language of a guarantee for a settlement that didn't exist yet. My instructions were to say only that we would be willing to guarantee an appropriate settlement if it contained adequate withdrawal provisions and ensured the Afghan people's right of self-determination. Cordovez wasn't satisfied. He asked me to put what I had said in writing with an endorsement of the guarantee clause adopted at the June round, even a conditional endorsement if necessary. We didn't do that because the psychology was that this agreement would never come to fruition. We didn't want it to look like the United States was obstructing it, but we didn't want to do anything that would stir up those in the Pentagon and in the [State] Department itself who were opposed to what the U.N. was doing.[8]

At the State Department, word of the Dunbar mission quickly got around. "We heard rumors," said Michael Pillsbury, Coordinator of Afghan Affairs at the Pentagon, "and we also got reports through intelligence channels. We were outraged. In March we had finally succeeded in getting the President to make a real military commitment to win the war by adopting NSDD 166, and now here it was, only month six of escalation, and we found that some people at State were getting ready to sell us out behind our backs."[9]

Pillsbury repeatedly asked the State Department for a copy of the text of the projected U.N. settlement but was never able to obtain one. Finally, he was able to get Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to raise the issue in his monthly breakfast meeting with Secretary of State Shultz on July 19. Shultz promised "full access." According to Pillsbury, however, when he went to see Robert Peck, Raphel's deputy in the Near East and South Asian Affairs Bureau, Peck "stonewalled me, saying it was all just tentative and notional, that it wasn't really worked out yet, that I was being paranoid. He kept showing me stuff that wasn't relevant, like press releases from the U.N." When Pillsbury reminded him that Shultz had promised "full access," Peck said that the Afghan Desk Officer, Desiree Milliken, might have more detailed files in her safe and that he would set up an appointment with her. But Pillsbury, demanding to see her without delay, stalked off down the hall with Peck trailing behind. "Peck had no chance to tell her what to do," Pillsbury recalled. At first, before Milliken realized what was going on, "she tried to be helpful" and showed him one or two files that included what he described as "an electric, blistering" memorandum from Abraham Sofaer, the State Department Legal Adviser. Sofaer argued in the memo that U.S. endorsement of the proposed guarantee would conflict with the Afghan aid policy codified in NSDD 166. "It was clear from the memo," said Pillsbury, "that

State was on the verge of agreeing to the guarantee, but they never did show me the text. Peck was standing there fidgeting impatiently, complaining that he had another appointment. Desiree finally got the drift and said she had a lunch date. They told me that the Top-Secret, No-Distribution file was upstairs somewhere in the secretary's office, and I would have to pursue it there. But no one at the DOD wanted to raise the issue with Shultz again at that time. We had made our point and we concentrated on the weapons program."

The debate over the guarantee issue continued within the Reagan Administration throughout the autumn of 1985. However, in a meeting with Reagan during the U.N. General Assembly session, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi found that the President himself was unaware of the controversy. Gently criticizing the United States, Gandhi told newsmen that "when the President said there was no progress on Afghanistan, I pointed to the fact that the Russians were ready to give guarantees but that evidently the U.S. was not willing to talk about it. He was a little surprised, and turned to Armacost, who told him it was true, the U.S. was not ready to talk about guarantees, it was talking about a schedule for the Russians to walk out of Afghanistan."[10] Addressing the General Assembly a day later, Reagan called for negotiations to end the regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua. "In some cases," he declared, "it might well be appropriate to consider guarantees for any agreements already reached."[11] This ambiguous language carefully excluded Afghanistan, where agreement had not yet been achieved. Stephen Sestanovich of the NSC, who drafted the speech, explained that "we weren't trying to say anything about Afghanistan as such; we were trying to create a diplomatic track for the Reagan Doctrine by talking about regional conflicts generally."

The American assessment of Soviet intentions in Afghanistan changed somewhat as a result of the Soviet-American summit in Geneva from November 19 to 21. Speaking to a group of editors, the President reported that his talks with Gorbachev had "produced evidence that he wants a solution to this problem."[12] "When I brought up the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan," Reagan later wrote in his memoirs, "Gorbachev responded that he had known nothing about it personally until he heard a radio broadcast, suggesting that it was a war he had no responsibility—and little enthusiasm—for."[13] The new atmosphere was reflected in comments by American officials returning from Geneva that Gorbachev's Afghan-related remarks were "intriguing" and "different."[14] Secretary of State Shultz was among those most outspoken in his reaction. Chatting in a hallway at Geneva with Fred Ikle, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Shultz told Ikle with some excitement that "it sounds as if they're going to change their policy on Afghanistan."[15] Morton Abramowitz, who saw Shultz regularly, said that "there was a subtle change in his attitude concerning Gorbachev after Geneva, a feeling that something was going on. Shultz recognized this well before the CIA and the Sovietologists. He was the only one who got it right. But I don't believe anyone really believed a settlement in Afghanistan was possible in 1985. What happened was that Shultz and Raphel decided we had to keep in step with a new situation and show more interest in the Geneva negotiations for cosmetic and tactical reasons."

The "dealers" were quick to exploit the change in the atmosphere resulting from the Geneva summit. Pointing to ever more insistent pressure from Cordovez and to criticism of the U.S. stand from Rajiv Gandhi and other Third World leaders,[16] the State Department won a major victory on the guarantee issue that was to become a focus of bitter controversy in later years. On December 11, the United States told the U.N. that it was prepared to guarantee the U.N. agreement, with only one proviso: that the agreement contain a satisfactory withdrawal timetable. On December 13 Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead disclosed the new policy in a major speech. Describing the other provisions of the U.N. text as "largely completed" and as "ancillary" to the key withdrawal issue, Whitehead implicitly accepted the cutoff of U.S. weapons aid envisaged in the settlement.[17]

In a revealing interview, Whitehead described how he managed to neutralize resistance to this momentous change in U.S. policy from the "bleeders" and their sympathizers. Shultz had accepted an invitation to address the Washington Council on World Affairs on Afghanistan, but another obligation had forced him to appoint the Deputy Secretary as his surrogate. "I had to give a speech," Whitehead told me, "so we had to have a policy." Raphel persuaded him that it was time for the United States to make its readiness for a settlement credible and to put the Soviets on the defensive in world public opinion. When Raphel drafted a letter to the U.N. expressing U.S. willingness to be a guarantor and wrote a paragraph on the guarantee issue into the speech,

> I realized that we didn't have the right to do this without clearance from the Secretary and the NSC. The Secretary was no problem but I knew that the hard right, the "Evil Empire" people, the Gordon Humphreys of this world, wouldn't like it. So we made 95 percent of the speech anti-Soviet. I remember a meeting in which the NSC was skeptical. We argued that it really didn't mean much because the settlement wasn't going anywhere, and we weren't committed, anyway, until we approved the final text as a whole. Basically we argued that we were only writing the letter to the U.N. so the U.S. wouldn't be accused of holding up the accords. If we had said it was important it wouldn't have been accepted.

The NSC hemmed and hawed, Whitehead said, finally giving its approval "just a few days" before the speech.[18]

"It's not that they put anything over on us," said Stephen Sestanovich. "We just didn't think it was such an issue because we felt that the settlement would be renegotiated anyway once the Soviets decided what they were going to do. None of us saw this as a text that was evolving incrementally, as Cordovez did."

"At the time," recalled Elie Krakowski, Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, "this change in U.S. policy passed almost unnoticed, the reason being that details of the agreement were being kept secret," even from "most government officials outside of those immediately involved in the Department of State."[19] Nevertheless, Krakowski publicly voiced the Pentagon's strong suspicions in a speech at the conservative Heritage Foundation in early 1986.[20] In retrospect, he wrote later, the Whitehead speech was a major milestone because "the U.S. had in effect confirmed for the Soviets that the only

element that mattered to it was a Soviet troop withdrawal." By stating that the other elements of the settlement were "largely completed" and conditioning U.S. acceptance of the U.N. guarantee clause solely on a satisfactory withdrawal timetable, Whitehead had signified U.S. acceptance of the provisions of the draft settlement that would require the U.S. and Pakistan to cut off aid coincident with "D-Day," the first day of the Soviet withdrawal.[21]

Whitehead's conditional commitment to the guarantee clause and his implicit acceptance of the "D-Day" formula were to become increasingly controversial during the next two years as the terms of the emerging Geneva accords gradually leaked out. The "bleeders" demanded to know who was responsible for giving NSC approval to the U.N. letter and to Whitehead's December 13 speech and whether the President had been consulted.[22] The identity of the NSC official or officials involved became something of a mystery because National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane resigned on December 4, 1985, and his successor, Admiral John Poindexter, did not assume his post until January 6 after completing a mission for President Reagan in Nicaragua.[23] In the interim, Donald Fortier, who moved up to the position of Principal Deputy National Security Adviser, was in charge, but Fortier was not formally appointed until December 10. (He has since died.)

"I am afraid that John Whitehead's statement postdates my resignation," McFarlane wrote to me, "and therefore I have no way of knowing whether it was coordinated with the White House. I can only say that it was not coordinated with me before December 4."[24] Senator Gordon Humphrey blamed Shirin Taher-Kheli, a Pakistan-born member of the NSC staff, and held up her nomination as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations for two months in 1990. Taher-Kheli said that she happened to be the only one still in the office, working late, when an aide to Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost telephoned one evening. The aide complained that Armacost had been waiting for several days for clearance of the speech and of the letter to the U.N. on the guarantee issue. "Armacost and Fortier had been in touch about this," she recalled. "I found copies of everything and took them to Fortier, who was in a meeting that was running late. He looked it over quickly and told me to go ahead and tell them it was O.K. I was just the messenger girl."[25]

As to whether Reagan was consulted, there is general agreement that he knew nothing of the Whitehead letter and had never been briefed in detail on the provisions of the U.N. agreement prior to that time. "I would be astonished if he knew anything about it," said Stephen Sestanovich of the NSC. "There was no need for him to know at that stage." Lawrence Eagleburger, who dealt with the U.N. negotiations as Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs until March 1984, said that during his tenure "we felt it would only complicate matters to bring the President into it before we had an actual agreement to show him. We were afraid of getting locked into positions that might not be realistic as the negotiations evolved."[26]

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 1, 1986, Robert Peck carefully sidestepped the issue of what the President knew in exchanges with Representative Stephen Solarz and Senator Humphrey:

SOLARZ: Has the President approved of our willingness to be a guarantor of an agreement in principle if there is an agreement?
PECK: That decision was fully vetted within the Administration, and it is an Administration position. It is not a State Department position.
SOLARZ: Well, when you say it is the Administration's position, are you also saying it is the President's position?
PECK: Every Administration position is the President's position.

* * *

HUMPHREY: It has been alleged to me that this was a middle level kind of thing that somehow escaped the notice of the White House. First of all, was it approved by the Secretary of State?
PECK: This decision was an Administration decision which was considered fully up and down the line.
HUMPHREY: Why don't you just say whether it was or it wasn't?
PECK: You know that it was—it was approved by the Secretary.
HUMPHREY: It was approved by the Secretary.
PECK: And it was fully vetted within the Administration.
HUMPHREY: That is another one of those delightful diplomatic terms. Was it approved by the President or not, yes or no?
PECK: It was a decision which was fully vetted within the Administration.
HUMPHREY: Is there an echo in here?

The key factor that enabled Whitehead to prevail in December 1985 was the widespread assessment in Washington that there was no prospect of a Soviet withdrawal. As Michael Barry of the CIA commented in mid-1986, "the general belief is that the settlement isn't going anywhere, so it was felt there was nothing to be lost in agreeing to guarantee."[27] "We made a tactical bureaucratic decision not to pick a fight over this stuff," explained Michael Pillsbury. "We just didn't take it seriously. In our minds everything depended on escalation and especially on getting the Stingers. We didn't make as much of a fuss as we could have because we had bigger fish to fry."

The Stinger Decision

As Soviet deployments of MI-24 and MI-25 assault helicopters in Afghanistan increased during 1984 and 1985, pressures in Washington grew to counter Soviet escalation by providing Stingers to the resistance. Fired like a shotgun but with less recoil, the thirty-four-pound, five-foot, shoulder-fired Stinger is portable and was thus ideal for the Afghan environment. With its infrared homing device, it could be targeted more accurately than the Soviet SAM missiles and other antiaircraft weaponry provided by the CIA during the early years of the war. In military terms, the case for the Stinger was unassailable, and the pro-Stinger forces eventually prevailed on February 26, 1986, after an unusually acrimonious bureaucratic struggle.

Initially, the Stinger campaign was spearheaded by Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Fred Ikle and his aggressive Coordinator for Afghan Affairs,

Michael Pillsbury, with strong support from Republican Senator Orrin Hatch and other congressional conservatives. Pillsbury, who holds a doctorate from the Columbia University School of International Affairs, had worked for Hatch on the staff of the Senate Republican Policy Committee before shifting to the Pentagon and was able to bring potent Republican political pressure to bear on the White House. In the critical final months of the campaign, Morton Abramowitz became a fervent convert to the cause and played a key role by forging an interagency consensus in which the State Department joined.

The Stinger proponents won their victory in the face of overwhelming bureaucratic resistance that persisted until the very end of the struggle. The army was reluctant to deplete stocks of one of its best new weapons and feared that the secrecy of American technology would be compromised if Moscow obtained Stingers, either on the battlefield or through the black market from corrupt Afghans or Pakistanis involved in the aid pipeline. The CIA, emphasizing the importance of "plausible deniability," argued that the use of American weaponry would make the war appear to the world as one between Moscow and Washington rather than one between Moscow and the people of Afghanistan. The State Department warned that the introduction of high-tech American weaponry against Soviet forces could provoke a dangerous Soviet response against Pakistan. For this reason, the Department argued, Islamabad did not want Stingers.

Pillsbury and Ikle set out to deal with the "Pakistan argument" by visiting Islamabad in May 1985. General Akhtar Rahman Khan, the ISI Director, told them what they wanted to hear, declaring that the resistance could not attack its main targets effectively because it lacked adequate antiaircraft weapons. He presented a shopping list of requests for new weapons that included Stingers. Pillsbury got the CIA Station Chief in Pakistan to convey this request in a cable to Director William Casey. President Zia Ul-Haq, however, did not commit himself on Stingers for the Afghans. "He hemmed and hawed," said Ikle. "He eventually changed his mind some time later, but he was cautious at that point." Zia urged that the United States first supply Stingers and Sidewinder air-to-air missiles to the Pakistan armed forces; he would then consider the issue of Stingers for the resistance.

On their return, Ikle and Pillsbury reported on Akhtar's shopping list to the Inter-Agency Subcommittee set up to oversee Afghan aid under NSDD 166. When everybody rejected the idea of Stingers, Ikle told Pillsbury to "forget it, you're new in government and there's no point in pursuing lost causes." But Pillsbury and Hatch decided to go back to Pakistan for another meeting with Zia. In a two-hour session on June 6, the Pakistani leader once again requested Stingers and Sidewinders for his own forces. At Hatch's suggestion, Zia made a formal request to this effect in a letter to President Reagan in late June in which he emphasized that Soviet aircraft were increasingly intruding into Pakistani territory. In July, the United States gave Pakistan twenty Stingers and a larger number of Sidewinders, on the understanding that they were solely for use by Pakistan's own forces.

By September 1985, Morton Abramowitz, who had then been Assistant

Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research for six months, had become increasingly disturbed by evidence that the resistance was losing. He was also more and more convinced that the CIA was not giving the Afghans adequate weaponry and was mismanaging its Afghan operations. In September Abramowitz heard that Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, planned to visit Pakistan as part of a Middle East tour. He joined Armitage's party and had his first chance to size up the situation personally. In Pakistan, General Mirza Aslam Beg, then a Corps Commander responsible for a major part of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and later to become Army Chief of Staff, "gave us a very downbeat briefing, telling us frankly that the *mujahideen* were getting beaten," Abramowitz related. "We knew this was not the official line, and it made a great impression." Although they didn't see Zia, General Akhtar "was very supportive and made very clear he didn't think the U.S. was doing enough. I came back feeling strongly that something had to be done to reverse the tide. I felt Gorbachev's advent was important, that it wasn't *his* war, and that we should encourage him to get out by raising the costs."

"Mort came back a driven man," said Pillsbury. "He went to see everybody, Shultz, Armacost, Casey, everybody involved. He made it an issue." Still, the Inter-Agency Subcommittee continued to resist Stingers, focusing on the fact that Zia had not clearly asked for them. CIA Deputy Director John McMahon argued that the British Blowpipe missile would serve just as well. To cover the purchase of Blowpipes and other improvements in the quality of weaponry in the Afghan program, the White House made a major addition to the $250 million already budgeted for the 1985 fiscal year. Bypassing the congressional appropriation process, the Administration reprogrammed $200 million of fiscal 1985 funds left unspent in a secret Defense Department account, precipitating "several weeks of heated debate in the House and Senate intelligence committees"[28] before Congress grudgingly gave its approval.

In an effort to destroy the "Pakistan argument" once and for all, Hatch, Pillsbury, Abramowitz, Ikle, and five members of the Senate and House intelligence committees traveled to China and Pakistan in January 1986. In Beijing, the *Washington Post* later reported, Hatch asked the head of Chinese intelligence "if he would agree to support the supply of U.S.-made Stinger missiles to the Afghan rebels, and if he would communicate his support directly to Pakistani President Zia as part of a coordinated lobbying effort."[29] After winning Chinese agreement, Hatch's party then flew to Islamabad, where it met with Zia. "He made crystal-clear 'I want the Stinger,'" Abramowitz recounted. "Having that unequivocal request for the first time was very important." Abramowitz and Pillsbury had persuaded the CIA to send Deputy Director of Operations Norman Gardner on the trip, and Gardner's report on the Zia meeting to his superiors turned the tide in the Inter-Agency Subcommittee. When the Subcommittee met in mid-January, only the army was still opposing the Stinger.

The army's main argument was that the Soviets might capture a Stinger, reverse-engineer it, and use it against NATO forces in Europe. A secondary argument was that the army had only three thousand Stingers in its own inven-

tory and couldn't spare any for the Afghans. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, expressing his concern over the possibility of technology leakage, had repeatedly raised this issue with Ikle. "I thought there was a great risk in using that technology," he recalled in an interview on January 21, 1994. "In general I felt we should not let our technology out, and I was very unhappy when some of our Stinger technology was in fact lost." Part of his skepticism about the Stinger campaign, he confessed, was his feeling that Pillsbury was "a loose cannon who was really in the department on sufferance because of his political friends."

Pillsbury combatted Weinberger's opposition with CIA help by producing evidence that Moscow had already obtained all the data needed to develop the Stinger through a U.S. intelligence leak in Greece. Then he telephoned General Dynamics, manufacturer of the Stinger, asking whether the company could make five hundred more. As it happened, General Dynamics was just about to phase out the basic-model Stinger it had been making in order to convert to a more advanced model. The new model had features specially designed for the European theater that were not required to cope with the helicopter challenge in Afghanistan. Armed with assurances from General Dynamics that more of the basic model could be made without affecting the production schedule for the new model, Hatch got Casey to call Weinberger, opening the way for final approval of the Stinger at the February 26 meeting of the Inter-Agency Subcommittee.

Until the eleventh hour, State Department opposition to the Stinger decision was not a major problem for Pillsbury and Ikle. Secretary of State Shultz, impressed by Abramowitz's arguments, had kept out of the controversy. A tacit understanding had evolved between Pillsbury and Arnold Raphel, who was initially the most vocal State Department opponent of the Stinger proposal. "Raphel gave the impression to Mort and to me that he wouldn't object to the Stingers if DOD left the U.N. negotiations alone," Pillsbury recalled. "We told them, 'No problem, you pursue world peace, it's too subtle for us, we'll deal with the situation on the ground.'" In early February, however, "Shultz got cold feet" and conveyed his concern to the White House that a Stinger program could seriously damage U.S.-Soviet relations. At that point Hatch took six powerful Republican senators to see the Secretary, who eventually went along with the Stinger decision.

Full implementation of the decision was delayed for nearly a year by a variety of factors. Training Afghans in the use of the missiles took much longer than expected. In contrast to radio-guided surface-to-air missiles such as the British Blowpipe, the Stinger, which automatically homes in on its target, is relatively simple to operate. But it requires complicated maintenance procedures and temperature controls that were not easy to teach to the Afghan Stinger units. Apart from training problems, another factor that contributed to the delay was congressional uneasiness, aroused in part by the resignation of CIA Deputy Director John McMahon immediately after the decision.[30] Appealing unsuccessfully for open aid to Afghan and Angolan rebels that could be voted on by Congress, Representative Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, declared that "I don't think it is wise to proceed on these

highly controversial foreign policy decisions without the support of the Congress."[31]

A more specific congressional concern was that the Stingers would fall into the hands of terrorists. In May Senator Dennis DeConcini got thirty-four votes in an abortive attempt to require strict monitoring of the distribution and use of the Stingers.[32] The CIA lobbied actively against his initiative, pointing to Pakistan's insistence on full control of aid operations. DeConcini's apprehensions proved to be justified when a resistance commander sold sixteen Stingers to Iran in September 1987. One of the missiles narrowly missed a U.S. helicopter in the Persian Gulf on October 8, 1987, prompting U.S. insistence on tightened procedures for distribution of Stingers to resistance units. After the Iran incident, each four-man Stinger unit got one launcher and one missile at a time. New missiles were supplied only after possession of the launcher could be proved.[33]

The decision to provide Stingers to the Afghan resistance was coupled with a parallel decision to give them to insurgents in Angola. Only three hundred Stingers were initially allotted for both Afghanistan and Angola. The first Stinger was not fired against a Soviet helicopter until September 26, 1986, and it was not until mid-1987 that Stingers were being deployed in Afghanistan in significant numbers. All told, some 250 launchers and 1,000 missiles were provided. In 1992, still concerned about diversion to terrorists, the CIA initiated an unsuccessful attempt to locate and buy back the Stingers that had never been used in combat. Congress appropriated $65 million for the operation, twice their original cost. But few were recovered, and intelligence estimates of the number unaccounted for have ranged from 200 to 400.[34]

Did the Stingers Matter?

What was the impact of the Stingers on the Geneva negotiations and on the course of the war?

"Despite what the Americans think, the Stingers made it much more difficult for us to move toward disengagement," former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told Morton Abramowitz in February 1992. "It made our military men, our hawks, much more determined than ever not to withdraw, not to appear to be giving in under duress. They didn't want to acknowledge that we were technologically inferior in any respect." "I don't believe that for a minute," Abramowitz commented, "but that's what he said." Gorbachev's other foreign policy advisers all echoed the Shevardnadze theme to me during a 1993 visit. "The Stingers definitely prolonged our stay," said Aleksandr Yakovlev. "The military-industrial complex said they would develop a counterweapon and that we should wait until it was tested. They got an excuse to keep deferring the withdrawal."

Clearly, the introduction of the Stinger forced a change in Soviet military tactics, making it necessary for assault helicopters and ground attack aircraft to shoot and bomb from higher altitudes with diminished accuracy, often at night, and to spend less time over any one target. This made it easier for the resistance

to bring supplies into the country and to conduct large-scale combat operations. Significantly, however, the Stinger was not responsible for a majority of Soviet aircraft losses in the war, and the "hit ratio" is a subject of controversy. According to one U.S. government estimate, the ratio averaged at best 50 percent. By the end of 1986, this study found, before a significant number of Stingers had been deployed, about one thousand Soviet and Afghan aircraft had been destroyed, primarily by Chinese-supplied Dashika 12.7-millimeter heavy machine guns and other less sophisticated antiaircraft weaponry. During 1987, when the Stingers were widely used, Soviet and Afghan forces lost 150 to 200 aircraft, and in 1988 Soviet-Afghan losses dropped to fewer than 50.[35] Another U.S. study, based on interviews with resistance groups in Pakistan, reported a hit ratio of 79 percent.[36]

General Valentin Varennikov, who was commanding Soviet forces in Afghanistan when the Stingers were introduced, acknowledged in an interview that the Stingers forced Moscow to reduce its reliance on airpower. But he disputed the contention that they inflicted greater Soviet and Afghan aircraft losses or significantly influenced the decision to disengage. American estimates of Soviet and Afghan aircraft losses during the war were "greatly exaggerated," he said. Pressed for year-by-year figures, he supplied charts showing a grand total of 114 Soviet planes and 332 helicopters lost from 1979 to 1989. In the pre-Stinger year of 1986, according to these charts, the totals were 17 planes and 44 helicopters respectively; in 1987, despite the introduction of the Stingers, only 19 and 49, and in 1988, 16 and 14. By contrast, Afghan losses jumped up sharply, since Afghan planes did not have high-altitude capabilities. Afghan air force losses jumped from 17 planes in 1986 to 33 in 1987 and 44 in 1988 and from 12 helicopters in 1986 to 21 in 1987 and 24 in 1988.[37]

Despite the leak of Stinger technology in Greece in 1985, Soviet planes and helicopters did not deploy an effective defense against the missiles in Afghanistan. The only countermeasures used by Soviet aircraft were relatively ineffectual infrared flares. Most U.S. observers concluded that Moscow had not yet figured out how to deflect the Stinger's accurate targeting, but Fred Ikle suspected that "they didn't want to reveal what they had in Afghanistan; they were saving it to use against NATO in Europe."

General Varennikov readily conceded that Moscow did not develop an effective defense against the missiles. "Our pilots had no choice," he explained, "but to fly at high altitudes above their range, or in places at low altitudes where it is difficult to distinguish between the background and the target, such as in mountain passes. The Stinger is most effective only against a blue sky." The most damaging weapon against Soviet aircraft, he said, was not the Stinger but the 12.7-millimeter Chinese Dashika heavy antiaircraft machine gun.

The widespread assumption that the Stingers turned the tide of the war, forcing Moscow to sue for peace, flies in the face of an objective assessment of the military situation on the ground during 1985, 1986, and 1987. Both before and after the Stingers were introduced, the war in Afghanistan was a stalemate in which first one side and then the other scored transient and inconclusive localized victories. The Soviet shift to more aggressive tactics under General

Zaitsev, initiated in late 1985, put the resistance on the defensive but did not cripple it or disrupt all of its supply lines. By the same token, the introduction of the Stingers gave the resistance increased confidence and mobility but did not result in the displacement of Soviet forces from any of their entrenched positions. As Mark Urban noted in a 1988 analysis, the high point for the resistance came in 1980, when it was unchallenged in nearly 90 percent of the country, and "the tide has never reached such heights since. The *mujahideen* have not succeeded in overcoming any brigade-sized Afghan garrison, nor in holding an entire provincial capital." The primary aim of Soviet forces "was to hold certain key points and the roads which connect them," Urban argued, "something which they succeeded in doing. The efforts of most guerrillas based in remote rural areas, and unwilling to fight outside them, were therefore irrelevant to Kabul's goals. . . . The important commanders were those who could threaten the key bases or road links."[38]

In early 1986, faced with the prospect of a massive Soviet offensive in the eastern border areas, the resistance marshaled all of its resources in an effort to convert its key base at Zhawar into an impregnable "defensive locality"[39] manned by resistance units trained in conventional defense tactics and organized in disciplined regular formations instead of in loose guerrilla bands. But Soviet air and ground forces had little difficulty in breaking through resistance defenses and destroying most of the equipment and ammunition stored there in elaborate underground fortifications. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* four months later, State Department Afghan analyst Craig Karp concluded that the Soviet victory at Zhawar provided "a valuable lesson to the *mujahideen.* They are not strong enough to hold or deny territory to the Soviets. Regardless of the antiaircraft weapons that the *mujahideen* may acquire, the Soviets will always be able to destroy static bases: They can mass air assets sufficient to overcome any such defense."[40] However, the "victory" of Soviet forces at Zhawar was a limited and temporary one, since they failed to eradicate resistance hideouts in surrounding areas and acquiesced in the reoccupation of the Zhawar base after their withdrawal. They demonstrated that they could capture the base and inflict great destruction if they so desired but proved unwilling to incur the high costs that would have been involved in seeking to hold onto it over a protracted period.

In Washington, advocates of providing the Stingers cited the battle of Zhawar as added evidence that the missiles were needed. However, the introduction of the Stingers did not affect the overall pattern of the war during its closing stages in 1987 and 1988. Even in the face of the Stingers, wrote David C. Isby in 1988, "the Soviets have still been able to keep control of the air," and they "are still capable of a long-term war."[41] While they had to cut back sharply on close air support, resupply of garrisons, and convoy escort missions, they compensated for the new constraints on their airborne capabilities by increasing their use of artillery, shifting to large-scale offensives in place of smaller operations, and concentrating their forces in their strongest garrisons. Soviet *spetznaz* forces suffered a setback in their June 1987 Paktia offensive, but Operation Magistral (Highway) at Khost in December was one of the major victories

achieved by Soviet and Afghan forces during the entire war. Some ten thousand men fought for fifty days against a comparable number of resistance forces, armed with Stingers, in tight valleys where helicopters had little room to maneuver. The Stingers took their toll, but mines proved to be a more serious problem for Soviet forces.[42] Eventually, the road to Khost was reopened, and convoy traffic to the Soviet-Afghan garrison there was resumed.

It is precisely because the military impact of the Stingers has been so difficult to assess with certainty that many of its strongest original advocates emphasize its psychological importance. "Of course we saw them as improving the military situation," reflected Fred Ikle, but "most of us at the Pentagon thought of the Stingers as a psychological weapon that would drastically change Soviet expectations and make them realize that we were prepared to raise the costs still further, that more was coming." During 1987, he pointed out, in addition to the Stingers, the United States also supplied sophisticated Spanish mortars equipped with guidance from a navy satellite. In a similar vein, Morton Abramowitz emphasized that "the whole idea was to show them that we could make the costs unbearable and that they should get out." By contrast, Ronald Krueger, who directed the Afghan Task Force at the Defense Intelligence Agency during most of the war, disputed the idea that the introduction of the Stingers was motivated by the belief that Soviet forces could be defeated. "Nobody thought they would leave," Krueger said. "Nobody thought so in 1986 or, for that matter, even in 1987 or 1988, right up to the accords, except for a few of us who were regarded as way off base. The idea of the Stingers, like everything else done under NSDD 166, was to raise the costs for the Russians, pure and simple."[43]

Confrontation with Karmal

As historical evidence accumulates, it is increasingly evident that Gorbachev was attempting to move toward disengagement in the face of hard-line opposition well before the Stinger decision was made in February 1986 and well before its military impact was felt.

The Politburo's review of Afghan policy initiated in April 1985 marked the beginning of an internecine debate that steadily intensified against the background of disappointing news from the Afghan battlefront. In late August, Soviet and Afghan forces, stepping up their offensive in the eastern border areas, launched their biggest operation since the Pansjer valley offensive in 1984. Their major goal was to capture the heavily fortified resistance base at Zhawar. Secondarily, they wanted to relieve the besieged Khost garrison nearby. More than twenty thousand men were involved in the assault. Although they succeeded in temporarily breaking the siege at Khost, they failed to capture Zhawar, which gave a psychological boost to the resistance and strengthened Gorbachev's case for pursuing disengagement.

On the eve of the October Communist Party plenum, the Soviet leader met secretly with Babrak Karmal, pressing him to liberalize his policies and to seek a

compromise with the resistance so that Soviet forces could get out. "Karmal was flabbergasted," writes Anatoliy Chernyayev, a key Gorbachev adviser. "He was certain that we needed him more than he needed us, and he believed that we would be there for a long time, if not forever."[44] "If you leave now," Karmal told Gorbachev, "you'll have to send in a million soldiers next time."[45] Faced with this attitude, Gorbachev called on the Politburo on October 17 to send strong "recommendations" to Kabul that conveyed a sense of urgency. The Politburo should make clear, he said, that "with or without Karmal, we will firmly carry out policies that must lead to withdrawal from Afghanistan in the shortest possible time." When Andrei Gromyko suggested amendments that would have watered down the message to Kabul, Chernyayev relates, "one had to see the smirks on the faces of his 'colleagues,' especially Gorbachev, who drilled into him directly with those diamond-like eyes of his. One read in those glances, 'who are you, *mudak,** to discuss and advise here? You involved the country in this dirty affair and now act as if it was nothing at all!'" The Politburo rejected the amendments, sent Gorbachev's proposed "recommendations" to Kabul, and adopted a resolution pledging to hasten the "early" withdrawal of Soviet forces while assuring the survival of a "friendly" regime in Kabul.

The October resolution constituted "a political decision, in principle" to withdraw, writes Eduard Shevardnadze, but "its implementation was very difficult, took time, and necessitated intensive preparations on all lines."[46] The first overt hint of this decision came in Gorbachev's Political Report to the Central Committee at the Twenty-Seventh Communist Party Congress on February 25, 1986, just one day before the Stinger decision was made by the Inter-Agency Subcommittee in Washington. Gorbachev declared that "counterrevolution and imperialism have turned Afghanistan into a bleeding wound," adding that the Soviet Union hoped to bring its troops home "in the nearest future" through a "phased withdrawal" in accordance with the proposed U.N. settlement.[47]

This pointed hint clearly implied that the bleeding must somehow be stopped. It was inserted into the report, Shevardnadze recalled, only after "a clash of the interests and positions of the various forces represented in the Politburo." On the day before the opening of the Congress, he received a final draft of the report and "discovered that it contained no mention of the need to withdraw our forces from Afghanistan. This clause, crucial in our view, had been in the earliest drafts of the speech. I phoned Gorbachev and told him that not a soul in the U.S.S.R. or the outside world would understand us if this sentence were omitted."[48] What resulted was less explicit than what Shevardnadze had advocated but represented a clear signal, nonetheless, that Moscow was ready for a face-saving disengagement.

Tensions between Gorbachev and Karmal over broadening the base of the Kabul regime sharpened after their meeting in October 1985. Karmal resisted Soviet demands for the transformation of the regime from one dominated by the PDPA to one in which influential non-Communists were given meaningful power.

*A Russian epithet referring to the male genital organ.

On November 9, 1985, in a gesture designed to appease Gorbachev, Karmal's Revolutionary Council announced "new approaches for the expansion of the social bases of the people's sovereignty." The council pledged to "enlarge composition of the state leadership organs . . . by the inclusion therein of the prestigious representatives of the people who can reflect the interest of the diverse strata and the different groups in our society."[49] But Karmal did little to implement this pledge. He appointed a non-Communist deputy prime minister and twelve non-Communist ministers without portfolio, deputy ministers, and advisers. Communists continued to retain all positions with real power. Moscow responded with an article on Afghanistan in *Pravda* on December 22 pointedly noting that "far from all people" in Afghanistan supported the ruling party.

Karmal was at odds with his intelligence chief, Najibullah, a member of his own Parcham Communist faction, over how far to go in liberalizing the regime. Afrasiab Khattak, a Pakistani Communist leader who spent seven years in Kabul as a political exile, observed the growing conflict between Karmal and Najibullah at close range. Khattak was familiar with Najibullah's thinking because they are both Pushtuns and worked together on a day-to-day basis in shaping Kabul's policies toward the Pushtun tribes in Pakistan. Khattak told me in 1993 that Najibullah was quick to grasp the significance of the changes occurring in Moscow under Gorbachev and saw a chance to take over from Karmal as President by getting in step with the new Soviet line.

The fact that he was a Pushtun helped to make Najibullah attractive to Soviet diplomats who were increasingly sensitive to the widespread complaints among Pushtuns that Karmal's regime was dominated by ethnic minorities and that he himself was not a "real" Pushtun. Although Karmal claims Pushtun ancestry, most Pushtuns do not regard him as one of them, pointing to his cultural roots in the Kabul elite. Among themselves, Khattak related, Dari-speaking "Kabulis" like Karmal often refer to Pushtu speakers as *pai-gird* (in Persian, literally 'round-footed ones,' or peasants without shoes).[50] As the jockeying inside the regime developed during 1985, Najibullah pressed Karmal to give more power to Pushtun Communist leaders in addition to bringing in more influential non-Communist Pushtun figures.

Soviet dissatisfaction with Karmal centered on doubts about his readiness to broaden his regime but also embraced other factors. One of the most important was his refusal to start discussions on a withdrawal timetable within the existing indirect format of U.N. negotiations in Geneva. Gorbachev, under pressure from Cordovez during late 1985 and early 1986, was ready to take this crucial step. But Karmal insisted that the withdrawal be discussed only in direct talks between Islamabad and Kabul. Unless Pakistan accepted the legitimacy of the Communist regime through such talks, he argued, Islamabad could not be trusted to honor the projected settlement. "He wanted to slow down the Geneva negotiations," said Yuli Vorontsov, former First Deputy Foreign Minister. "We couldn't move him to do anything."[51]

Another Soviet concern was Karmal's lack of vigor and dynamism as a leader. A key Soviet official at the United Nations repeatedly described him over the lunch table, even during 1984 and 1985, as "very lazy" and "a talker, not a

man of action."[52] Viktor Spornikov, a former KGB station chief in Kabul, told a Moscow seminar in 1989 that Karmal was "inactive, passive, and overcautious."[53] Putting the matter more strongly, Yuli Vorontsov said that in 1985 Karmal "stopped working and started drinking. He was incommunicado much of the time, in more or less of a stupor, and was sliding steadily downhill."

Karmal's health problems, including ulcers, high blood pressure, and a liver ailment, offered a ready pretext for bringing him to Moscow on March 30, 1986. There, for more than a month, the KGB first hinted and then suggested directly that he step aside gracefully as PDPA General Secretary in favor of Najibullah while retaining the ceremonial post of Chairman of the Revolutionary Council.

One of the key arguments that the KGB intended to use was that Karmal's health necessitated a slower pace. But "unfortunately, his condition turned out to be much better than expected," writes Lieutenant General Leonid V. Shebarshin, a deputy director of the KGB, who took part in the talks with Karmal. "No one managed to instruct the doctors in good time, and they all too conscientiously established that not even his liver problems had a threatening character. The patient need only refrain from hard liquor."

"We told him very clearly that the situation in the world and in Afghanistan was changing," Shebarshin recounts, "and that the time had come to give up the general secretaryship to one of his younger colleagues. . . . The Afghan was cunning. He tried to play for time and above all to get back to Kabul. He indicated his agreement in principle but said he had to consult his colleagues and consider how to assure stability in the party while making changes."

When Karmal departed for Kabul on May 1, the KGB's chief of foreign intelligence, Vladimir Khrychkov, was immediately dispatched close on his heels "to make certain there were no disruptions in the transfer of power." Before Karmal could mobilize his political defenses, Khrychkov confronted him in the Afghan capital on May 2. Citing the "understandings" reached in Moscow, Khrychkov called on him to take the initiative without delay in resolving the "organizational question" in the PDPA. "Karmal's face darkened," Shebarshin recalls. "He did not deny that certain agreements were reached in Moscow,

> but he warned that his removal would call forth an explosion of indignation and irreparably damage the reputation of the Soviet Union. Suddenly, coming unhinged, choking on his words, he cried, "kill me! sacrifice me! I am ready for death, for imprisonment, for torture!" He did not hear Khrychkov, did not allow himself to be interrupted, just continued his frenzied monologue. He debated aloud, going over the possible reasons for his disgrace one after another, and invariably arrived at the same conclusion: the motive for Moscow's decision lay beyond the bounds of the Afghan situation and was dictated by the Soviet Union's global interests.
>
> Softly, very softly and sympathetically, as if he were dealing with a hopelessly ill dear friend, Khrychkov reassured Karmal, flattered his self-esteem, and drew a rosy picture of the honor and respect which would surround his friend in the Soviet Union and Afghanistan for the rest of his life. . . . As for damage to the reputation of the Soviet Union, he said that no one in Afghanistan knew of the talks which had taken place in Moscow. "Do you think the Afghans are asses?" was the bitter retort.

> Soon Karmal began to leave the realm of all decorum, bemoaning the fact that he had done everything to enable the Soviet Union to interfere in Afghan affairs. Khrychkov reminded him firmly that Soviet soldiers were dying in Afghanistan, giving the Soviet side certain rights. "You should preserve yourself for the sake of the Afghan Revolution," urged Khrychkov. "Leave the Afghan Revolution in peace!" cried Karmal in a rage. "You say that the Soviet soldiers are dying in Afghanistan? Leave, withdraw your troops! Let Afghans defend their revolution themselves!"
>
> Moscow's envoy acted as if there had been no reference to Soviet troops. . . . Both sides were worn out. Khrychkov smiled affectionately and asked for a meeting the next day after both of them had thought over their discussion. Karmal silently assented, but that afternoon, an impressive deputation called on him, including the Ministers of Defense, Internal Affairs, and State Security, plainly telling him he should step down. Karmal exploded again in a demonstration of despair, but he finally surrendered, submitting his resignation to a plenum of the central committee.[54]

Karmal attempted to save face in Afghan Communist ranks by blaming his ouster on "the Soviet Union's global interests," especially Gorbachev's desire for a more pliable Afghan role in the Geneva U.N. negotiations. This was a convenient way to paper over the other factors that also motivated Moscow. However, the timing of his removal did make it unmistakably clear that Karmal's insistence on converting the indirect U.N. negotiations to direct talks was a central Soviet concern. Karmal's resignation on May 4 came just hours before the eighth round in Geneva. "That is why we were in such a hurry," said Georgiy Kornienko, former First Deputy Foreign Minister. "Gorbachev wanted to get negotiations on a withdrawal started, and Karmal stood in the way."[55]

Building a Shadow Government

The fact that discussions on a withdrawal timetable were finally beginning and that Karmal had been replaced did not alter the prevailing Washington assessment of Soviet intentions. Predicting that the war would go on for at least five more years, an analysis disseminated by the CIA in June 1986 concluded that "even if the principals in the current Geneva talks reach a 'settlement,' we doubt this would be more than an event . . . in a longer road. The emergence of Najibullah suggests to us that Moscow is not using the U.N. negotiations to cut its losses and get out, but to find a way to lower the intensity and costs of the conflict, at least for Soviet forces, while preserving its gains." Faced with the prospect of a long war and a strengthened Kabul regime, the study said, the United States should not only continue its military aid but should also expand its newly initiated economic assistance program "to help build and maintain the institutions of an Islamic alternative to Soviet purposes in Afghanistan."[56]

Beginning in 1985 the United States attempted to compensate for the political weaknesses of the Pakistan-based resistance groups by providing them with

steadily increasing cross-border economic aid, channeled through the resistance groups to their strongholds inside the country. Administered primarily by the Agency for International Development (AID), the "humanitarian assistance" program, as it was known, started with $2 million in its first year, grew to $15 million in 1987, and totaled $43 million by the time it ended in 1992.

In addition to providing "nonlethal" goods such as surplus U.S. military boots, sleeping bags, and a variety of equipment for schools and medical clinics in areas chosen by the seven parties of the resistance alliance, the AID also made cash payments for food purchases. According to official figures, the cross-border program had trained 1,115 basic health workers by the end of 1988 and had taught first aid techniques to 9,452 Afghans; established 889 health facilities; opened 1,209 schools serving 120,000 students; supplied more than 1 million new elementary school textbooks; distributed foodpacks for 83 million meals; cleaned and repaired 549 irrigation schemes; provided 9,000 tons of fertilizer; and treated 800 wounded Afghans.[57]

Critics questioned these statistics and charged that the political purposes of the U.S. program detracted from its humanitarian purposes. Peter Rees, director of Britain's Afghan Aid—one of some fifty-eight private voluntary organizations carrying on cross-border aid from Pakistan—said that "the U.S. aid package is putting a lot of money into the political arena and away from direct humanitarian aid."[58] The most pervasive criticism of U.S. cross-border aid was that its multitiered distribution network invited corruption. Aid officials were unable to monitor what happened to their money and supplies, it was argued, and the problem was aggravated by the existence of a network of middlemen.[59] One official of a private voluntary organization pointed out that AID relied on distribution receipts provided by the seven parties, "and the Americans don't know where these receipts come from."[60] A U.S. official privately told journalist Edward Girardet that only 15 to 25 percent of the cross-border aid actually reached the interior. The rest, he said, was skimmed off by Afghan and Pakistani middlemen.[61]

In some cases, U.S. cross-border aid was administered through subcontracts with private voluntary organizations that targeted their activities on selected areas where direct cooperation with politically accepted commanders and other local notables was possible. These were the success stories of the U.S. reconstruction effort. More often, though, the United States exerted heavy pressure on the private agencies and the United Nations to turn over all aid to the seven parties, either directly or through the short-lived Afghan interim government formed under Pakistani auspices in 1989.

The objectives of the economic aid effort were frankly political as well as humanitarian. Reagan Administration officials unveiling the program expressed the hope that it "would unify the fragmented seven-party resistance alliance" (the Islamic Unity of Afghan *Mujahideen*).[62] "By helping the Afghans to develop networks of resistance social services," said the AID budget request to Congress in fiscal 1987, "our assistance will enable the *mujahideen* (freedom fighters) to protect and take care of the people who support them."[63] In a 1988 description of the program, the agency went further in spelling out its political

objectives. "By working with the alliance," an AID statement said, "we are able to develop an institutional capability among Afghans to perform the civil functions of government."[64]

The more fervent advocates of the humanitarian aid effort viewed it as part of a long-term effort to establish a rival Afghan government that would displace the Kabul regime in the U.N., win official U.S. recognition, and receive open instead of covert U.S. aid. Some favored a government in exile, others a liberated zone inside Afghanistan. The premise underlying the liberated-zone strategy was that the proposed zone could be defended with an adequate number of Stingers and other sophisticated antiaircraft weaponry, together with enlarged units of resistance fighters organized in regular formations instead of in guerrilla bands. The principal advocate of this strategy was Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, who wanted the Pentagon to have responsibility for the proposed zone as part of a broad new role in developing paramilitary capabilities for covert operations. Legislation to create a $500 million "freedom fighter" fund under Perle's control was promoted for several months in early 1986 by congressional conservatives close to Perle but was eventually dropped in the face of bitter opposition from the CIA.[65]

Hailing the formation of the seven-party alliance, State Department official Robert E. Peck told a House Subcommittee on May 1, 1986, that "the resistance is at the beginning of what may be a long road leading to international recognition and acceptance." This cautious statement reflected doubts within the State Department about the capacity of the faction-ridden resistance groups to forge meaningful unity and fears that a Pandora's box would be opened by challenging Kabul's U.N. accreditation. The Soviet Union had threatened to retaliate in the event of such a move against Kabul by making countermoves against U.S.-linked regimes in the General Assembly. When a resistance delegation came to Washington in June 1986 seeking recognition, the State Department's view prevailed after extended controversy within the Administration. President Reagan told the Afghan visitors that it would be "premature" to extend recognition. The divisions over this issue surfaced publicly when an unnamed "senior administration official" told reporters that "premature meant it's not out of the question."[66] White House spokesman Larry Speakes promptly retorted that this interpretation was "wrong" and that the President felt recognition was "not appropriate."[67]

Moscow Gives Kabul a Deadline

While Washington debated how best to prepare for a long political and military struggle against Kabul, Gorbachev was steadily forging a consensus among Soviet leaders in late 1986 concerning the desirability of disengagement. At a November 13 Politburo meeting, Gorbachev declared that "we have been fighting already for six years. If we don't change our approach we will fight for another twenty to thirty years! Are we going to fight forever, knowing that our military can't handle the situation?" He then launched into criticism of Karmal,

who still held the ceremonial post of Chairman of the Revolutionary Council despite his ouster as PDPA General Secretary. Karmal was fighting a determined rearguard action against Soviet efforts to broaden the base of the Kabul regime. "He has his own agenda," Gorbachev complained. "He isn't straight with us. The main reason that there has been no reconciliation with the opposition so far is that Comrade Karmal is hoping to continue sitting in Kabul with our help." Anatoly Dobrynin, then serving as International Secretary of the Central Committee, agreed that "Karmal must be gotten rid of." But he cautioned that "as far as national reconciliation is concerned, not a single member of the Politburo supports Najibullah." Gromyko, by contrast, objected that "we should not cut off Karmal completely because he is a symbol."

Gorbachev pressed for a formal notice to Kabul that the withdrawal would begin "in one or a maximum of two years." Gromyko concurred but cautioned that the withdrawal should occur only if it could be done "in such a way that Afghanistan becomes a neutral state." When Politburo member Mikhail Solomentsev urged that negotiations on the withdrawal be completed not later than the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution in October 1987, Gromyko interjected that "it is difficult to talk of such a short period." However, in contrast to his attitude during earlier Politburo discussions of Afghanistan, Gromyko was on the defensive this time. "Apparently," he conceded, "we had an inaccurate perception of the difficulties when we agreed to give military support to the Afghan government."

The most serious differences at the November 13 meeting centered on whether Najibullah should be given authority to strip Karmal of his remaining powers and to establish a new defense headquarters separate from the Red Army command structure. Giving Kabul increased control over military operations, Gorbachev felt, was a key step toward turning the war over to Najibullah and pulling Soviet forces out. While favoring withdrawal, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev argued at the meeting that as long as Soviet forces remained, their autonomy should not be compromised. But Gorbachev prevailed in the end.[68]

Soon after this meeting, on November 20, Karmal was removed as Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and within three weeks Gorbachev had summoned Najibullah and his top Politburo members to Moscow. On December 12 the Afghan delegation faced a phalanx of Soviet leaders that included Defense Minister Sergei Sokolov and KGB Chief Viktor Chebrikov in addition to Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. According to Yuli Vorontsov, who was then First Deputy Foreign Minister and who was present at the meeting, Gorbachev warned bluntly that the Soviet Union intended to withdraw its forces by the middle or end of 1988 and would pursue the U.N. negotiations with this deadline in mind. Moscow would insist that the Kabul regime remain in place during the withdrawal and would continue to provide "full support" in the form of military and economic aid. But the regime would have to stand or fall on its own after Soviet forces left.

While Najibullah "did not challenge" what Gorbachev said, Vorontsov recalled, "certain other Afghans made clear that they did not consider Gorbachev's declaration to be final." During the critical fifteen months thereafter leading up

to the Geneva accords, Najibullah, under pressure from Afghan Communist hard-liners, would do much less to broaden the base of his regime than Gorbachev wanted and repeatedly would seek to delay and obstruct the Soviet withdrawal. In the end, Najibullah, like Karmal, attempted to postpone the inevitable as Gorbachev struggled against the opponents of the accords in Kabul, Islamabad, Washington, and, above all, in Moscow itself.

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9

THE SLOW THAW

Diego Cordovez

- *At Geneva Four (June 1985) three legal instruments are finalized*
- *Gromyko is kicked up-stairs and replaced by Shevardnadze*
- *A nagging dispute about direct talks develops*
- *Geneva Five (August 1985) becomes a boring dialogue of the deaf*
- *Washington announces that it will serve as a guarantor*
- *Geneva Six (December 1985) is another disaster*
- *1986 starts with a flurry of rumors*
- *In Moscow we reach an agreement on guarantees*
- *A talk with Shevardnadze and Gorbachev refers to Afghanistan as a "bleeding wound"*
- *At the fifth shuttle (March 1986) I finally settle the direct talks dispute*
- *Geneva Seven starts (May 1986) the day after Karmal "resigns"*
- *Mrs. Thatcher and Qian Qichen send optimistic assessments*
- *Geneva Eight: A breakthrough on monitoring?*
- *During the sixth shuttle (November 1986), Gorbachev says that the Cordovez mission will be successful*
- *My first meeting with Najibullah*
- *Dost is replaced by Abdul Wakil*

I

On June 20, 1985, we started the fourth round of negotiations at the Palais des Nations. Yaqub was described by the press as "cautiously optimistic" when he left Islamabad airport. I said on my arrival in Geneva that we were entering a

new phase in the diplomatic process that would involve essentially the completion of the legal instruments that would make up the settlement.[1]

Raymond Sommereyns and I had prepared four draft instruments, an operation that had not proved very difficult because we had already submitted two drafts (on noninterference and on the interrelationships) at the previous round. We "lifted" the two other (on refugees and on guarantees) from the famous "single" text that we had been drafting since the beginning of the Geneva negotiations.

I was somewhat concerned that Dost might—rightly—point out that nobody had asked me to prepare four documents. When we met in my office on July 19 he seemed, however, to be in a very good mood. He brought me a box of Cuban cigars and said that in preparing the four documents I had shown to be, "as always," ahead of all of them. After a few minutes of light conversation he picked up the four documents, which I had discreetly placed on the coffee table, and went back to his hotel.

We then engaged in four days of intense, serious, and businesslike negotiations in what Yaqub described as an excellent "ambiance." Both sides wanted to be sure of the meaning and the implications of each word, and both made a number of changes; both became very nervous each time that the border issue was mentioned; and both showed that they could be both statesmanlike and petty. Except for a few points of detail, we were able to complete Instruments I, II, and III. My strategy of isolating the withdrawal issue seemed, at long last, to be working.

It was agreed that I should transmit the instrument on guarantees to the Soviet Union and to the United States, which, by default, had become the "designated guarantors." It was also agreed to reconvene on August 27 to consider Instrument IV. Yaqub said upon his arrival in Pakistan that "considerable progress" had been made at Geneva.[2]

Kozirev had been following the proceedings with obvious satisfaction. Everything seemed to be moving smoothly, and we agreed to have a relaxed lunch. Leaving aside the Afghan negotiations, he spoke quite openly about the changes that he hoped Gorbachev would bring about in his country. When he mentioned that he expected that Soviet foreign policy would also undergo significant modifications, I was reminded of Waldheim's story about Khrushchev and Molotov. I carefully noted that Gorbachev might not be able to move swiftly as long as Gromyko, a hard-liner, remained Foreign Minister. He looked at me as if what I had just said was heresy and as if the replacement of such a monument was unthinkable. "You know," he said, "he has never made a mistake." Whatever his personal qualities, I said, Gromyko was not the man to set in motion the kind of policy changes that Gorbachev had in mind. Kozirev seemed incapable of accepting that somebody who had been in charge of Soviet diplomacy since he had joined the service could be removed. A couple of weeks later Gromyko was "kicked upstairs" when he was appointed President of the Soviet Union and was replaced by Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze, a tough Georgian politician who was known to be very close to Gorbachev.

I had insisted that the round of negotiations be held after a meeting on

Afghanistan that American and Soviet officials had agreed to hold in Washington at the beginning of June. It was the first discussion that the two governments had held specifically on the Afghan conflict since 1980. The United States had stressed that it could not negotiate on Afghanistan with the Soviet Union and that the only purpose of the meeting was "to ensure that each side understands the other's position." But both sides had agreed to support the Geneva process. That allowed me to say, when the press started to speculate that the superpowers might take over the negotiations, that the Geneva process would be strengthened by the periodic consultations on Afghanistan to be held by the United States and the Soviet Union.

On my return to New York I had a number of meetings with Vasily Safronchuk, who in the meantime had been appointed First Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations and thus became my Soviet interlocutor at U.N. headquarters. He seemed very optimistic but started to talk more and more about the need to discontinue the "proximity" format and move on to direct talks. I pointed out that nothing of the sort had been said in Kabul when the agreement on the set of instruments had been considered. He argued that I was taking an unnecessarily rigid position at a time when the Pakistanis were inclined to accept the idea of direct talks. The Afghan Ambassador also became very insistent that the next round should be conducted in the direct format.

What had happened was that on June 27, the day after the negotiations were adjourned, the BBC had quoted Yaqub as saying that Pakistan would "enter into direct negotiations with the Afghan government if there was a need to do so." The BBC had noted that this was "the first time that Pakistan has hinted at the possibility of having direct talks with the Kabul regime." The Pakistani papers printed the statement that Yaqub had made during a press conference at Islamabad airport: "When the situation, and the developments, reach a stage where direct talks will be appropriate in the fitness of things, there is no reason why we should not have direct talks." Yaqub had added that "[w]hen things develop in that direction, we can consider the question of direct talks. But that stage has not been reached."[3]

Yaqub spent several days in Washington starting on July 15, and we met in New York on July 22 and 23. The enthusiasm and optimism that he had displayed in Geneva were once again gone. A friend told me that he had been "reprimanded" for the BBC statement. "It is May 1983 all over again," said Safronchuk. When I told Yaqub that the Soviets and the Afghans were insisting that direct talks be held at the next round to consider Instrument IV, he vehemently denied that he had said anything that could be taken as a change of position on the format of the negotiations. At a dinner with General Vernon Walters, the new American Ambassador to the U.N., Yaqub urged me to resist any effort by the "other side" to link direct talks with the discussion of the instrument on interrelationships. I told him that I would try but that he should not underestimate the strength of the Soviet position. At a subsequent meeting I conveyed to him a suggestion by Safronchuk that he and Dost might meet briefly in my office at the beginning of the next round of negotiations, but he readily brushed it aside.

On July 30 the Afghan Chargé d'Affaires came to deliver an unusual written message from Dost. Without referring to the BBC report Dost said that his Government had taken into consideration the "assurances" given by the Pakistani Government that it would be ready to have direct talks and that if such assurances were confirmed, the Afghan Government would be ready to consider Instrument IV. I immediately called in Shahnawaz and asked him to transmit Dost's message to Yaqub. On August 15 Yaqub replied that "the question of holding direct talks will justifiably be considered when sufficient progress will have been made on all four documents." The terms of the formal dispute on the format of the subsequent negotiations, which had been developing over several weeks were now set out in writing.

On August 1 I had a long meeting with Armacost. After I told him how fruitful the last Geneva round had been, he admitted that he had detected "a lot of hints of a different Soviet style" but that there had not been any change on substance. Something was taking place in Moscow that needed additional inducements. On that basis he stressed that it was essential to press the Soviets on the time frame for withdrawal and added, in a stern tone, that "direct talks [were] not in the cards."

I told Armacost that one additional inducement might be a positive American response regarding the instrument on guarantees, which I had transmitted to the United States and to the Soviet Union on June 18. That would be seen, I said, as a concrete indication of U.S. interest in a settlement. He authorized me to tell the Soviets that the United States Government, "if it were to be formally requested to act as a guarantor, would be ready to consider favorably such a request."

On the matter of direct talks I had always relied on the Soviets to soften up the Afghans, but this time they themselves seemed very rigid. During one of the long discussions that Safronchuk and I had in July, I tried to explain the position of Pakistan and the United States. After all, I said, neither the Soviets nor Kabul had ever said anything about the withdrawal. Washington and Islamabad might change their attitude, I added, if they were to be told "something," even if it were that "the withdrawal will take seventy-five years." Safronchuk smiled but seemed annoyed and impatient. "In a very strange way," he said, "it is often assumed that the Americans and the Pakistanis are interested in the withdrawal." "This is not so," he added. "We are the ones who are interested, not them!" If direct talks were held, he pointed out, "they would be told exactly *how long* the withdrawal will take, *when* it will start, and *when* it will be concluded. And *it will not take seventy-five years.*" I knew that Safronchuk had spoken in good faith but that his words would have no effect whatsoever. In such cases I just wrote down a personal note for my memoirs.

II

By then I had organized the small staff that assisted me until the end of the negotiations. My chief lieutenants were Raymond Sommereyns and Hisako

Shimura. Giandomenico Picco, one of Perez de Cuellar's closest aides, participated in most team discussions, in the negotiations, and in trips to the area to keep the Secretary General informed of all our activities. The three of them were outstanding in their grasp both of concept and of detail in all the questions that had to be dealt with in the negotiations. Other members of my staff were occasionally asked to help on special assignments. Felix Downes-Thomas, Sylvanus Tiewul, and Alexandar Martinovic accompanied me on some of the trips to the area and to Moscow and Geneva and kept track of General Assembly debates and documentation. Charlie Santos gave me excellent advice when we started to promote national reconciliation among the Afghans of all sides. When we formulated the monitoring arrangements I was very lucky to count on the assistance of General Timothy Dibuama, the Secretary General's military adviser. Cathy Szlamp kept the mammoth files, organized the trips, negotiated schedules and complex logistical questions with foreign ministers and administrators, issued stern orders to security and protocol officers, chose restaurants and menus, handled all unexpected problems, and cheered us all when we felt frustrated.

Yaqub's closest advisers, after Humayun Khan became Ambassador to India, were two of his undersecretaries (Additional Secretaries in the vernacular of the Pakistan Government), Shaharyar Khan and Najmuddin Shaikh. He also seemed to trust Mansur Ahmad, the Ambassador in Geneva, who was always seated on his left. Riaz Mohammed Khan, a brilliant young diplomat who was posted in New York, participated in all the Geneva negotiations. There were four or five other delegates carefully taking notes. I greatly admire the professional skill of the staff of the Pakistani foreign service, even if on occasion they made every effort to send me to a psychiatric institution.

The diplomatic stature of Dost within the Kabul regime seemed to be such that it would not be appropriate to speak of advisers. He handled everything alone at the negotiating table, but he had on his right his deputy, Sarwar Yuresh, a party man whose face never disguised his opposition to the withdrawal of troops, and on his left Farid Zarif, the Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The Afghan Ambassador in Geneva followed the negotiations attentively although he did not understand a word of English. We identified a member of the Afghan delegation as a kind of Soviet commissar; we called him "Tass." We called his opposite number in the Pakistani delegation "The Voice of America."

We all assembled in Geneva for the fifth round of negotiations on August 27. As expected, Kabul's request to change the format of the talks was formally made just as soon as Dost walked into my office. He told me that if Yaqub refused to hold direct talks, he was prepared to wait "two or three years" until Pakistan "becomes more reasonable." When Yaqub came for a similar meeting he was equally intransigent and equally prepared to wait for as long as it would take the Afghans to realize that "procedural gimmicks" were futile.

I spent two whole days trying to organize the round of negotiations. Neither Yaqub nor Dost was willing to consider any kind of compromise formula, but eventually Dost agreed to hold formal proximity talks exclusively to review the state of the negotiations, to discuss the reaction of the designated guarantors to

the draft instrument on guarantees, and "to consider arrangements which would enable the negotiations to proceed on the substance of the fourth instrument." The discussions were held in my office, without advisers, and there were both comical and tense moments. It was only when I promised to prepare a paper with a new formula for the continuation of the negotiations that Dost agreed to resume the formal proximity meetings.

I had been hoping that I would be able to divert the attention of Yaqub and Dost, at least temporarily, to the guarantees issue and thus pretend that substantive negotiations were continuing. But I had received a reply to my request for comments on the draft instrument only from the Soviets. (Implicit in Moscow's comments was its acceptance of the concept underlying the draft because it had sent only a number of suggested amendments that in my view did not raise insurmountable difficulties.) The United States had said nothing after my meeting with Armacost, so I called Dunbar (Armacost was not in Washington) a few days before my departure to ask him if it was possible to have a written communication based upon Armacost's statement that the U.S. would "consider favorably" a request to be a guarantor of the settlement.

Dunbar came to New York on Friday, August 23, at 5:00 P.M. (I had made arrangements to travel to Geneva over the weekend). He confirmed Armacost's statement but refused to give me anything in writing, explaining that "further comments" could be made only after the whole settlement was ready. On August 27 I received in Geneva a curt letter, signed by Herbert Okun, the U.S. deputy permanent representative in New York, in which he did not refer to the guarantees draft. Okun only "recalled" that I had held consultations with his Government and wished me "every success" in bringing about a settlement.

I was extremely disappointed. I told Yaqub and Dost that this was not what I had been told in Washington. At that stage, however, they were wholly obsessed with the format question and therefore decided, without even considering the issue, that I should send the Soviet amendments to Washington and Okun's letter to Moscow.

Two days of formal proximity talks proved useless in trying to solve the format dispute. The paper that I prepared suggested that the proximity talks continue until the four instruments were closer to completion. Dost did not move an inch. We held several sessions, which seemed interminable to me, arguing the pros and cons of giving an indication of his intentions on the withdrawal time frame. He seemed nervous and strained. At one point he was delving for documents in his elegant briefcase, at the next he was scribbling in one of his numerous and carefully kept notebooks. He said several times that I would be surprised how far-reaching his position would be if direct talks were held. Yaqub said that Pakistan wanted to see Kabul's willingness to start discussing the core issue. Dost replied that the core issue was the direct talks. Dost proposed an absolutely secret meeting with Yaqub in my presence. (I suppose Kabul thought that such a meeting would imply a recognition of the regime by Islamabad.) Yaqub readily refused. What I could not understand, and was unable to find out, was why the Soviets were so inflexible and unbending. I spent many hours with Kozirev, but he never gave me a clue.

The round of negotiations had not produced any results, and I did not see the purpose of convening another one. "Should we have another session of squabbling later in the year?" I asked. Much to my surprise both sides said yes. As a matter of fact, the two foreign ministers looked rather pleased with themselves when they came to say good-bye.

III

Immediately after my return from Geneva I left with my son Diego for a long trip around South America. He was born in New York and except for regular "home leave" visits to Ecuador and to Chile, his mother's native country, he had not been able to see much of the rest of Latin America. He was then twenty years old, and I felt that it would be good for both of us to travel together. We became friends and enjoyed the trip thoroughly. For at least three weeks I forgot all about Afghanistan, the interlocutors, direct talks, and the draft instruments.

The annual session of the General Assembly in the fall once again provided an opportunity for discussions with Yaqub and Dost about the problems that we were facing, but both remained adamant in the positions they had taken during the August round of negotiations. It was a difficult time for me as mediator because the Americans were accusing me of pressing the Pakistanis to accept direct talks. It often happens, particularly during periods of tension and strain, that one side or the other, and sometimes both, considers that the position and the words that a mediator transmits are his own. And yet the mediator is doing nothing more and nothing less than what he is duty-bound to do.

What those who were accusing me of partiality did not realize was how hard I was pressing the Soviets and the Afghans to show their cards. It was in my own interest to ensure that the time frame for withdrawal be discussed, for the simple reason that unless and until the negotiations were centered on the Soviet withdrawal, the diplomatic process would not have the credibility that was needed in order to move toward a settlement.

There was something else that nobody knew at the time. In the context of my conversations with the Soviets about the format question, I was again pressing them to remove Karmal. Based on my discussions with Zia and Yaqub I told them that it was impossible for Pakistan to hold negotiations with a man who was the personification of every negative quality that Pakistan had used to justify its position and policies on Afghanistan. When the Soviets said that both Karmal and Zia were dictators, I pointed out that there was a very fundamental difference: Karmal had been installed by foreign troops. If the Soviets were not "in love" with Karmal, as they frequently said, why not persuade him, I asked, to step aside in order to facilitate the conclusion of a settlement?

The Soviets had never appeared so rigid. A particularly negative statement was made by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa on October 10: "Only after Afghanistan and Pakistan discuss the issue directly will the Afghan side and ourselves sit down to decide the question of withdrawal."

The Kapitsa statement was brought to my attention by the British Ambas-

sador at one of my regular meetings with the representatives of the European Community. My only comment was that recent Soviets attitudes were confusing. Presumably the Soviet Union was willing to withdraw only if the Karmal regime was legitimized. Another possibility was that the Soviets were trying to show the Karmal "leadership" how strongly held were the American and Pakistani attitudes on the question of recognition. Yet another possibility, which would have been at variance with everything that the Soviets were telling me, was that they were not sincerely willing to withdraw. I pointed out that if I ever reached the conclusion that that was the case I would discontinue my efforts.

Not too long after the Kapitsa statement was made, however, I started to discern the first indications that Soviet solidarity with the Karmal regime was cracking. When I told Safronchuk that during a visit to New York Zia had notified Perez de Cuellar that his Government's position would definitely not change, he replied: "Please tell Dost what you just told me." Subsequent discussions with Safronchuk and with other Soviet officials indicated that it might be possible once again to have their cooperation in settling the procedural dispute. One of them told me that Dost would be asked to stop over in Moscow on his way back to Kabul to discuss the issue. "But you must understand," he said, "that they feel very strongly about recognition." At long last they were again making a distinction between their position and that of Kabul.

The report of the Secretary General for 1985 was much more detailed because we felt that it was necessary to show that the diplomatic process had gone very far—three of the four legal instruments were ready. The report noted that it was regrettable that an impasse on the procedure should have arisen at a time when both sides had indicated "that agreement on the substance of all pending texts should not present insurmountable difficulties."[4]

That year the resolution condemning the Soviet actions in Afghanistan was adopted by 122 votes to 19, with 12 abstentions.[5] After six years and seven resolutions the majority supporting the resolution had gradually increased from 104 votes in January 1980 to 122 in 1985. The countries voting against the resolution were only the hard-core allies of the Soviet Union.

Just as soon as the resolution was adopted I asked Yaqub and Dost if they would be willing to consider the idea of a memorandum of understanding in which each side would indicate its position regarding the contents of Instrument IV. On that basis we could, perhaps, reach an agreement on the format for the continuation of the negotiations. They both agreed to discuss my proposal. Safronchuk seemed very enthusiastic because I think he had become as desperate as I was to get rid of the problem. But when Yaqub's advisers started to raise all kinds of problems I decided to drop the idea and even suggested the postponement of the round of negotiations scheduled for December.

Yaqub sent me a letter from Islamabad insisting that the round of negotiations be held on the scheduled date. Dost sent a message to the effect that in December he would be ready to give me "the form and basic contents of the paper on interrelationships for transmission to Pakistan in order to convince them of the need to have direct talks." I asked Zarif if the information that was

being promised would include an indication of the time frame for withdrawal. "I think so," he replied.

I concluded that a round of negotiations in December, its bleak prospects notwithstanding, was unavoidable. I was only hoping that the Reagan-Gorbachev summit might bring about new elements to sort out the dispute.

IV

If there were some doubts as to whether the Afghan conflict was going to be discussed at the summit, they were dispelled by President Reagan himself when he made his General Assembly speech on October 24, during the U.N.'s fortieth anniversary celebrations. On that occasion he also made a three-point "peace process" proposal for the resolution of regional conflicts: first, talks between the "warring parties" themselves; second, discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union, "not to impose solutions but to support peace talks and eventually eliminate the supply of arms and the proxy troops from abroad"; and third, joint efforts "to welcome each country back into the world economy and the community of nations that respect human rights." I was particularly glad that the proposal was not in any way incompatible with my efforts.

According to *Newsweek,* "The cordial handshake seemed to say it all: the two most powerful men in the world were finally talking to each other." On November 19 and 20 Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met in Geneva for more than fifteen hours in the first East-West summit in six years. Their meetings were reported to have been sometimes friendly and sometimes "brutally direct." But the "fireside summit," as it was called, constituted a "fresh start" in U.S.-Soviet relations "and the world could only be safer for that."[6]

Don Oberdorfer wrote in the *Washington Post* on November 22 that on Air Force One, flying back to Washington, White House spokesman Larry Speakes had said that the United States felt that there was "something new" in Soviet policy towards Afghanistan. Speakes had emphasized "Gorbachev's unemotional tone about the Afghan war . . . and his expressed desire to work quietly to find a way out."

On November 24 the *New York Times* reported that the summit discussions on regional issues had been very sharp "but Mr. Reagan came away convinced that Mr. Gorbachev was looking for a diplomatic solution of the conflict in Afghanistan". Secretary of State Shultz said in an NBC interview that Gorbachev had "some interesting and a little bit different kinds of things to say" on Afghanistan. "We will want to see what we can do to support success in that negotiation," he added.

Press dispatches were much more informative than the official report that I received from the U.S. Government. I was told that at the summit Reagan had stressed that the Soviet's continuing intervention in Afghanistan was one of the main causes for lack of confidence and trust between the United States and the Soviet Union. Reagan had suggested a Muslim peacekeeping force to police a

cease-fire, but Gorbachev had not responded. Instead, Gorbachev had said the Soviet Union supported "the solution emerging from the U.N." "Gorbachev did not mention any necessity for direct talks," the report added, and did not raise "the standard Soviet charge that the problems of Afghanistan are the fault of Pakistan, the U.S., and China."

In the *Washington Post* of December 2 Oberdorfer reported that the Administration was planning to make a public statement, which he said I had requested, clarifying its position on guarantees. State Department officials had indicated that the United States would be willing to provide guarantees "to facilitate Soviet withdrawal as proposed in U.N.-sponsored negotiations," subject to its approval of the overall settlement. "A statement to this effect was provided to U.N. chief negotiator Diego Cordovez shortly before the August round," State Department officials had said. "But the statement was considered so sensitive within the Administration and internationally that it was not put in writing but told to Cordovez by Charles Dunbar."

If Oberdorfer's information was accurate, I thought, then the summit, and Gorbachev's tantalizing attitudes, would prove to have been crucial in moving the negotiations forward. On December 11 Ambassador Vernon Walters handed Pérez de Cuéllar a letter in which, after recalling that "Undersecretary of State Armacost made it plain to Mr. Cordovez that the United States was willing to play an appropriate guarantor's role," he added that Washington could accept the draft guarantees instrument, "provided, of course, that the central issue of Soviet troop withdrawal and its interrelationship with the other elements in the comprehensive settlement were effectively addressed and resolved."

On December 13, in an address to the World Affairs Council, Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead announced that the United States had accepted a guarantor role in an Afghan settlement.[7] Three years later, Walters's letter and Whitehead's speech became the subject of intense polemics in Washington because President Reagan had apparently forgotten that he had been consulted. An exasperated Phyllis Oakley, the State Department spokesperson, when asked whether, "leaving aside what the President knew and when he forgot it," Walters and Whitehead had stated the U.S. position at the time, replied: "It was a U.S. Government policy, an Administration decision and action."

When I informed Safronchuk of Walters's letter, he asked me if the United States had made any comment on the Soviet amendments to the draft instrument on guarantees. I told him that they had not and that I intended to put that issue aside until the impasse on the format of the negotiations was resolved. I would then "go back to the Russians on the guarantees question." "You mean you will then ask us to withdraw the amendments?" he asked. "Yes, indeed, the amendments and the troops," I replied.

V

When I reached Geneva for the December round of negotiations I eliminated the private meetings with my interlocutors that had traditionally preceded the

formal proximity talks. I wanted to make it unmistakably clear that unless there was agreement to change the format we would continue to hold proximity talks.

Recalling my conversations with Safronchuk and other Soviet officials in New York, I asked Yaqub to answer a number of questions that had been raised, particularly concerning Pakistan's *locus standi* on the issue of withdrawal. "What is the role of Pakistan in the legal sense relative to the withdrawal of troops from another country?" I had been pointedly asked. Yaqub replied that events in Afghanistan had direct consequences in Pakistan. It was not only the question of refugees but the fact that an "inflamed border" had serious security implications. He recalled that in the early 1970s the Soviets had taken the position that Pakistan's actions in its own territory, and the consequent flood of refugees, had created a situation that justified the war India waged against Pakistan. The point had been made by Kosygin to President Bhutto.

I told Dost that it would be damaging to the diplomatic process to spend a whole round arguing about ways and means of convincing Yaqub to have direct talks. As if he agreed, Dost then gave me an outline of what Afghanistan considered should be the contents of Instrument IV. In addition to envisioning a time frame for withdrawal—after so many fights and tantrums this was in itself significant—the paper proved very disappointing because we all expected to see a time frame proposal that would at least serve as a basis for further negotiations. Beyond that, on the question of direct talks, Dost did not budge.

Kozirev was as inflexible as Dost. I continued to be perplexed because such an attitude was entirely inconsistent with Gorbachev's words and intimations at the summit and with what Safronchuk had insinuated to me in New York. Kozirev did indicate that Dost was annoyed with the frequency of our meetings. We agreed to be more discreet.

I concluded that I would have to engage in yet another attempt to draft a memorandum of understanding with the goal of increasing the level of trust between my interlocutors. The draft I submitted was intended to achieve a balanced set of assurances on the outstanding issues:

> 1. The political settlement will consist of a set of four instruments, namely: a bilateral agreement between the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) and the IRP (Islamic Republic of Pakistan) on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on noninterference and nonintervention; a declaration or declarations on international guarantees; a bilateral agreement between the DRA and the IRP on the voluntary return of refugees; and an instrument setting out the interrelationships between the aforementioned instruments and . . . withdrawal of troops in accordance with an Afghan/Soviet Agreement.
>
> 2. The four instruments will be signed on the same date. They will enter into force (thirty) days later.
>
> 3. During the period between the date of signature and the entry into force the parties shall complete all the steps that are necessary to ensure full compliance with the instruments upon their entry into force.
>
> 4. On the date of entry into force all provisions of the instruments will become fully effective, which means that there will be no interference and intervention in any form . . . ; the . . . guarantees will become operational; the arrange-

ments . . . on refugees will be set in motion; and the gradual withdrawal of the foreign troops will start and continue until completion within a period of . . . .

Dost told me that the text was "unrealistic and totally unacceptable." Yaqub said with obvious delight: "Before you tell me Dost's reaction I want to say that I accept the substance of the draft." Many long hours of generally frustrating and often annoying discussions with Dost followed, which clearly indicated that he was participating in the diplomatic process exclusively for the purpose of achieving recognition. "If that is the case," I told him, "the less you talk about direct talks and the more you talk about substance, the better your chances of recognition will be."

That evening I spent many hours thinking that the time frame for the withdrawal of troops had been unnecessarily mystified to the point of turning it into some kind of taboo. Perhaps I should do something to change that. It had never been accepted that an international official could make proposals concerning such sensitive questions and the Soviet Union could rightly take exception. But I felt that a proposal by the mediator of "a basis for further negotiations" would undoubtedly give impetus to the diplomatic process. The following morning I therefore issued a revised version of the draft with the words "six months" where the previous text had dots.

I told Yaqub and Dost that I did not wish my proposal to be discussed before they had consulted their respective Governments. I told them that I intended to inform the press that we had started to consider the contents of Instrument IV (which was true because Dost had made a formal proposal on the contents), including the time frame for withdrawal (which was also true because I had submitted a specific suggestion), and that we had been unable to solve the dispute about the format of the negotiations. Much to my surprise, they both agreed. I believe that both were required to pretend that we were moving forward.

VI

An article by Bernard Gwertzman in the *New York Times* of January 1, 1986, produced an explosion of speculation that lasted several days. The article quoted a senior State Department official as saying that during the December round of negotiations Dost had shown me "a timetable for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan within a one-year period as part of an overall accord." According to Gwertzman's report, "Mr. Dost handed the timetable to Mr. Cordovez, 'allowed him to read it but took it back,' the official said, but gave the United Nations representative a summary of the timetable." Gwertzman added that the senior official had said that Dost had told me that he would present the timetable only "if the Pakistanis would come into direct negotiations." The senior State Department official had expressed the view that "[t]here is reason to be optimistic even though the last meeting adjourned without results."

Gwertzman's report was pure fiction but was nonetheless also printed in the

Times of London on January 2, in *Le Monde* on January 3, and in many other newspapers around the world. There were dozens of commentaries and "analyses." Following the developments from Florida, I was both amused and concerned. A friend called me from Washington to say that the "senior official of the State Department" could only be Shultz himself, Whitehead, or Armacost and that the article was obviously intended to send a message to the Soviets to the effect that a one-year time frame would be acceptable.

Shahnawaz called my office in New York to say that I should clarify whether I had told the Americans something that I had not told his Foreign Minister in Geneva. I replied that I had not talked to the Americans since the last round. My friend called again from Washington to tell me that the Pentagon people he had talked to were furious. A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Islamabad told the press that "Pakistan had received no such information as was reportedly contained in [the *New York Times*]."[8]

On my return to New York I told Zarif that I was not sure that another round was desirable if it was going to be like the previous one. At the same time I told Safronchuk that I wanted to know what Soviet policy was "at the source" and that I felt it was necessary for me to go to Moscow as soon as possible. I pointed out that there had been too many inconsistencies between what Gorbachev had said and the position that Kozirev had taken at Geneva.

On January 14 I was invited by Secretary of State Shultz for a luncheon in honor of the President of Ecuador who was paying an official visit to the United States. Shultz told the President that "we are counting on [Cordovez] to get the Soviets out of Afghanistan." We had a brief exchange in which I stressed that it was essential to press the Soviets "by maintaining a constructive attitude." I then had a long talk with Armacost in his office.

We first exchanged notes on the last round of talks. Armacost was very eager to know if I felt that Dost did indeed have a time frame for withdrawal in Geneva. I told him that he had certainly behaved as if he had it. Dost told me several times, I said, that if Yaqub wanted to see the time frame he only had to walk into the room.

Armacost asked why I had not proposed a time frame. "I did," I replied, "and Dost agreed to take it home." A few days later I was told that U.S. officials had "leaked" the memorandum of understanding to the press—there was a long article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* datelined Washington—but I interpreted that leak, as well as Gwertzman's article, which was not mentioned in my conversation with Armacost, as indications of American interest in a settlement. The article in the *Review* also mentioned that "senior U.S. officials were stunned" when Gulbuddin Hekmatyar had refused an invitation to meet President Reagan.[9]

A few days later I had to attend the inauguration of President Ascona in Tegucigalpa. On my way back I missed the airline connection in Miami and only after exasperating delays and complications did I finally land in New York at 2:00 A.M. I took a cab and noticed the name of the driver on the dashboard. "Are you Afghan?" I asked. He was a military officer who had defected after the invasion, and he recognized my name when I told him that I was often in Kabul.

We had an interesting conversation all the way to Manhattan. When we reached my apartment the meter showed thirty dollars, but he absolutely refused payment. "I cannot take money from a friend of my country," he said. I told him that I was willing to agree that I should not tip him, but I insisted that I pay for a service he had provided. We started to argue until I decided to make a quick escape after throwing two bills on the front seat. He immediately picked them up and pushed them into my pocket. Nat, the night doorman, realized that something was happening and approached the cab. When I told him the story he said that there had been problems other times because people had refused to pay but that he had never seen a New York cab driver giving anybody a free ride. "Such are the Afghans," I told him. "Wonderful people."

Safronchuk seemed exhilarated when he told me that the Soviet Government would welcome me in Moscow "for discussions on the draft instrument on guarantees." That was to be the formal purpose of my trip, but "obviously" I would be able to talk with Soviet officials about any other subject. I requested Vladimir Kolesnikov, a senior Soviet official of the Secretariat, and Raymond Sommereyns, to accompany me on the trip. Kolesnikov had once been mentioned in a newspaper article as a KGB agent. I do not know if that was true or not; he likes to consider himself a professional diplomat and an expert on China. Very few people helped me more in my mission.

VII

I arrived in Moscow on Sunday, February 9, and the following morning I held my first meeting with Georgiy Kornienko, the First Deputy Foreign Minister. From the beginning it was clear that the discussions would not be limited to the instrument on guarantees. At the same time it was evident that Kornienko wanted, in a very formalistic way, to take the position that we were talking about a negotiation between Afghanistan and Pakistan that was of some interest to the Soviet Union. The language was as elliptical as always but fortunately, after three years of discussions with Soviet officials, I understood it.

I placed considerable emphasis on the lack of trust between my interlocutors and on the efforts that I had made to force them to test each other's intentions. That was the purpose of the memorandum of understanding, which contained the essence of the settlement. Kornienko's comments showed once again how much the Soviets distrusted Pakistan, but he did not question the terms of the paper.

When we discussed the guarantees instrument, I realized that most of the Soviet amendments were made to rectify semantic problems. They were working on a translation that had many obvious defects. Using the official English text, I explained the meaning or intent of a number of words that had been misunderstood. Kornienko seemed incredulous when I told him that Washington had accepted the text that had been prepared in Geneva and that the comments that I had received from Armacost—after Whitehead's announcement that the United States had agreed to be a guarantor—referred to the Soviet

amendments and not to the draft instrument. Concluding the discussion of that subject, Kornienko indicated that the instrument would not be a major obstacle. I understood.

During a lunch at a luxurious residence that the Soviet Foreign Ministry used for social entertainment (it was donated by a Mr. Morozov, a rich merchant, to the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Russian Revolution), Kornienko told me that the Afghans were very concerned because I had failed to convince the Iranians to participate in the negotiations and to sign the instruments. I said that the Iranians had undertaken in a written document to support the settlement if it included the withdrawal of troops. He then told me about his recent visit to Teheran (the first step towards a rapprochement between the two Governments), and I got the impression that he shared my conclusion that Iran would not create problems.

I then had a meeting with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, who was very friendly and pleasant. He seemed to be very sure of himself and determined to mark a total break of style and substance with his predecessor. He had taken over the direction of Soviet diplomacy with little or no experience in foreign affairs but had a long record as a politician. During our conversation it was obvious to me that as Foreign Minister he wanted to show the softer side of his personality—he was said to write love poems, to keep bees, and to tend a private vineyard. With great skill and imagination he had started to set in motion a new foreign policy for a new era. The "Shevardnadze option" had not yet taken full shape, but he was already laying the foundations of a realistic and pragmatic approach to world affairs. Afghanistan was undoubtedly among his priority concerns.

Shevardnadze made clear to me that the Soviet Union approved the "scheme" that I had worked out for the settlement, which I took to mean that he did not intend to question the memorandum of understanding. In passing he mentioned that the guarantees instrument was also ready. "It is necessary to proceed with the discussion of the fourth instrument within this scheme," he added. The meaning of that statement was clear. It basically confirmed that a time frame for withdrawal would be an integral part of the settlement—but I pointed out that we were facing a procedural impasse that prevented a negotiation of the scheme. "It is not an impasse; it is a problem which you can solve," he replied. Shevardnadze was thus promising his help to break the deadlock.

I was looking for an opportunity to introduce into the discussion the subject of the internal situation in Afghanistan without knowing if this would annoy Shevardnadze, but then he himself said that the Afghan problem had two aspects—the external and the internal. His Government was pleased to see that the Afghans in Kabul were making efforts "to broaden the social base," which was proof of their awareness that internal developments should be adjusted to "the mechanism envisaged in the negotiations." What Shevardnadze essentially wanted to convey was his Government's determination in future to assist in the solution of all outstanding issues and in very discreet terms to indicate that tensions with Kabul explained the difficulties that we were facing.

Before leaving New York I had mentioned to Safronchuk that a visit to

Moscow without a Bolshoi ballet performance would not be complete. I think I enjoyed *The Sleeping Beauty* more than ever before because the talks seemed to be proceeding satisfactorily. The following morning Kornienko wished me luck on my trip to the area, which he said would be crucial. Indeed it would be, and I was expecting that the Soviets would send the implicitly promised signals to ensure good results.

On my return to New York, Safronchuk invited me to a "celebration" lunch at the Soviet mission, which I took to mean that my visit to Moscow had been successful, and then told me that the amendments to the guarantees instrument were being withdrawn. That allowed me to tell the press that the two superpowers had agreed to serve as guarantors of the settlement.

A few days later, on February 25, addressing five thousand delegates assembled in the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin for the Twenty-seventh Communist Party Congress, Gorbachev made the "bleeding wound" speech, in which he said that the Soviet Union would like to withdraw its troops "in the nearest future." He added that a schedule had been agreed upon with the Afghans for a phased withdrawal "as soon as a political settlement is reached."

The statement was significant not only because it was made during a Party Congress, the first held under Gorbachev's leadership, but because it referred clearly to a schedule for the withdrawal of troops. My Soviet friends told me that although the word *schedule* had been used in the English version of the speech, Gorbachev had, in fact, used an expression in Russian that was closer to the concept of a deadline.

VIII

"Cordovez arrives today on make-or-break mission," proclaimed *The Muslim* of Islamabad on March 7. Based on the assumption that it would be impossible to continue the negotiations if the format impasse was not sorted out, I told Elaine Sciolino of the *New York Times* before leaving New York that I intended to stay in Islamabad and Kabul for "as long as it is necessary to solve the problem."[10] I was required to go back and forth between the two capitals several times during ten days in order to find a solution, but then I felt really confident, for the first time, that we were moving toward a settlement.

Most of the action took place in Kabul, but I first went to Islamabad to get from Zia himself the "bottom line" on the question of direct talks. He solemnly confirmed that Pakistan could hold such talks only after all four instruments had been finalized.

In Kabul I agreed with Kozirev that the memorandum of understanding should be replaced by a Note for the Record that would contain a formal and definitive agreement on the format. Dost was obviously under great pressure from the "leadership" on that issue, and therefore Kozirev and I had to coordinate our efforts and use all our imagination not only to prepare suitable texts that would help Dost overcome those pressures but also to find places and opportunities to meet discreetly.

The formula that eventually emerged provided that there would be only one more round of negotiations—the seventh—which would start in the "proximity" format and that, once the four instruments had been finalized, direct talks would be held by the interlocutors. Dost demanded that an additional provision be included specifying that the formalities for concluding the instruments be "carried out in accordance with established practice" and that, accordingly, "normal relations between the two countries would then be deemed to have been established." Pakistan reluctantly agreed.

Inasmuch as I was fairly certain that it would not be possible to conclude a settlement in one more round, I told Yaqub and Dost that any further negotiations would be considered "resumptions" of the seventh round. I had a lot of fun watching the press trying to understand what I meant when I said that "there will be no eighth round."

Dost then disclosed the long-delayed time frame proposal that Zarif had predicted would be a "pleasant surprise" to the U.N. press corps. It was, in fact, a shocking disappointment. The document basically said that the withdrawal would take four years and then only if it was periodically ascertained that the commitments regarding noninterference by Pakistan and Iran had been "thoroughly and completely fulfilled." I spent a whole night tossing and turning after it was delivered to me in Dost's conference room.

I did not find in Pakistan the same sense of disappointment regarding Kabul's proposal. The Pakistanis seemed to attach greater importance to the fact that their position on the question of direct talks had prevailed and that we would at long last be discussing the time frame for withdrawal. I told Zia and Yaqub that Kozirev had assured me that the proposal constituted essentially "a basis for negotiations." Kozirev had also asked that the Afghan proposal be kept secret, which I thought was a good indication of their disposition to reduce the length of the time frame. Trying to explain Islamabad's reaction, a Pakistani friend told me that the Government needed some time "to prepare the *mujahideen* leaders for a settlement" and that therefore a longer time frame suited their purposes at that stage.

Upon returning to New York, Raymond Sommereyns and I immediately started to prepare a new version of Instrument IV. It had been agreed in the Note for the Record that the paper submitted by Dost would not be used. The text that we prepared was essentially a refined version of our previous one, but it was not an easy task because the two sides had become extremely sensitive on a number of points. Because we did not want to accord any respectability to Dost's paper, we decided that our draft should not contain the time frame that it had proposed. Our version again had a blank space where the time frame was to be stipulated. When I showed the draft to Safronchuk, he said: "Amazingly similar to ours, but better." "You mean," I said, "that 'your' paper is not the one that Dost gave me?" Safronchuk then coined a new term. "Keep talking," he said, "until you get the *real* time frame. It will not take long."

Such insinuations were very useful for a private discussion (without note-takers) that I held with Armacost on April 4. He told me that he was fairly optimistic but that it was necessary to have further and more concrete proof of

the Soviets' good intentions. I conceded that many people felt that there was in Moscow a change of style but not of substance. But my friend Qian Qichen, the Chinese deputy foreign minister, had told me over lunch in New York that the Soviets were sincere on Afghanistan. "I think I can deliver the Russians," I said, "if you deliver the resistance."

A few days later, in an address to the Dallas World Affairs Council, Armacost delivered what I understood as the U.S. response to Gorbachev's speech at the Communist Party Congress in February:

> We have made it clear to Moscow that if it makes the political decision to withdraw, we will work to facilitate a negotiated solution. . . . Our objective is not to bleed the Russians but to get their troops out of Afghanistan. So long as the Soviets pursue a military option, we will continue to support the Afghan cause through all appropriate means. And Afghanistan will remain an obstacle to the overall improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations.[11]

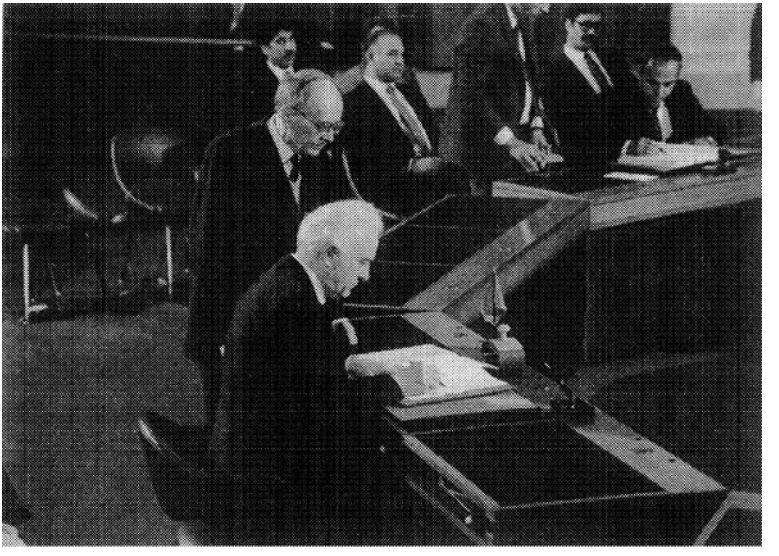
Both Gorbachev's and Armacost's statements sent, in my view, a very clear and useful message to Islamabad and Kabul. On April 17 I traveled to New Delhi with Raymond Sommereyns to deliver the draft of Instrument IV to Yaqub and Dost, who were attending a meeting of the non-aligned nations. I found Dost, whom I met first at his Embassy, rather sad and somber. He listened attentively when I explained what I had done, received the document, and put it in his briefcase without showing it to his aides.

Yaqub invited me to dinner at the Pakistani Embassy. Unlike Dost, he read the text carefully, flanked by Naik and Shaharyar, and asked a number of questions. He then said it was a "fine effort," handed the paper to Shaharyar for safekeeping, and talked about other things.

IX

The seventh round of negotiations was scheduled to start on Monday, May 5. I landed in Geneva very early in the morning on Sunday, May 4, and spent the whole day resting in the apartment that the Nabulsis (a charming couple who were U.N. staff members) always rented out to me during my stays in the city for Afghan activities. That ensured the privacy that I could not have in a hotel; only Cathy and a couple of friends knew my location and telephone number. Throughout the day I felt very disappointed because during a private conversation in Moscow I had been given to understand that, by the time the seventh round opened, "Karmal would no longer be there."

There had been many rumors and speculations. At the Communist Party Congress in February Karmal had been conspicuously denied a meeting with Gorbachev. Karmal had not been seen in Kabul during the celebrations of the Sour revolution. It was said that he left for Moscow with full military honors on March 30, but his arrival in Moscow was never reported by Soviet or Afghan news agencies. There was speculation that he was under medical treatment.

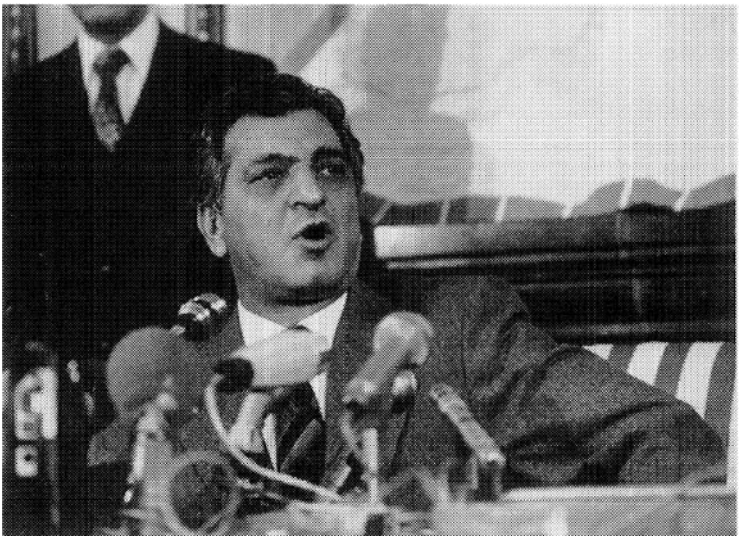


Foreign Minister Edouard Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union (center foreground) and Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil of Afghanistan (right) sign the Geneva Accords on April 14, 1988, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. (United Nations Photo)

Diego Cordovez, Undersecretary-General for Special Political Affairs of the United Nations (left), who negotiated the Geneva Accords, and General of the Army Valentin I. Varennikov, commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, meet in Kabul to discuss last-minute arrangements for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. (United Nations Photo)

The last battalion of Red Army tanks rolls across the "Friendship Bridge" spanning the Oxus River at Termez on the Soviet-Afghan border on February 16, 1989, marking the completion of the ten-month Soviet withdrawal on schedule. (Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos)

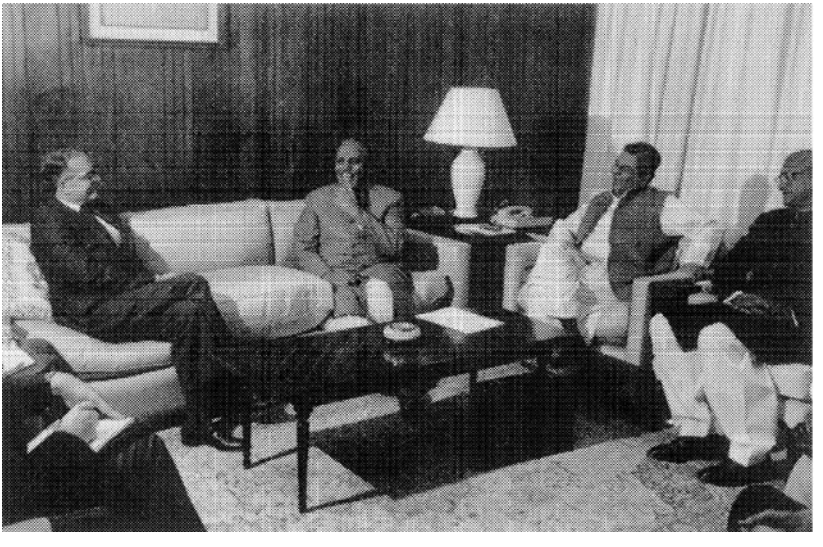
Despite Soviet opposition, Hafizullah Amin (above, addressing a press conference) seized the presidency of Afghanistan on September 14, 1979 from Noor Mohammed Taraki (not shown), who died under mysterious circumstances three weeks later. Amin was killed by a Soviet special-forces squad on December 27, the first day of the Red Army occupation. (UPI/Bettmann)



Babrak Karmal, shown addressing a public meeting in Kabul, served as President of Afghanistan and General Secretary of the Afghan Communist Party for the first six years of the Soviet occupation. Installed by invading Soviet forces on December 27, 1979, he consistently resisted Soviet concessions in the Geneva United Nations negotiations on a Soviet withdrawal. (UPI/Bettmann)

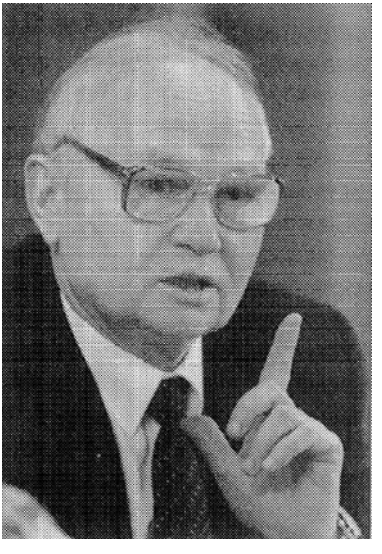
Visiting Islamabad on January 24, 1983, Diego Cordovez (left) meets with Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, a key player during the six-year negotiations culminating in the Geneva Accords. (United Nations Photo)

Given Pakistan's refusal to hold direct talks with the Afghan communist regime, Diego Cordovez conducted his negotiations on an Afghan settlement through "proximity talks" from 1982 to 1988, shuttling back and forth between the two delegations in Geneva. In the above meeting on August 29, 1985, Cordovez (second from right) faces the Afghan delegation led by Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost (with glasses). (United Nations Photo)



Diego Cordovez (left), meeting in Islamabad on February 9, 1988 with the President of Pakistan, Mohammed Zia Ul-Haq (center), discusses the final round of negotiations on the Soviet withdrawal about to begin in Geneva. Zia attempted to block the Geneva Accords until the eleventh hour. (United Nations Photo)

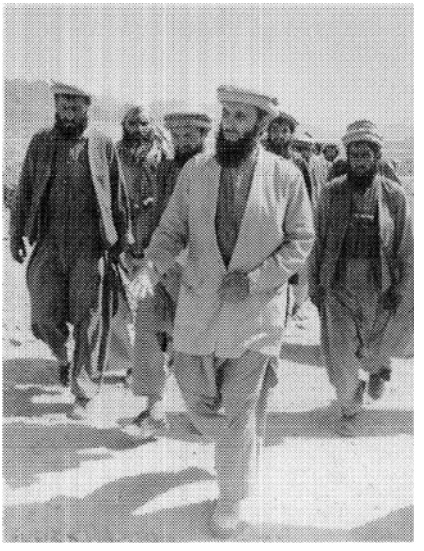
Yuri Andropov, who initiated the first serious Soviet efforts to find a diplomatic escape route from Afghanistan during his tenure as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party from November 1982 until February 1984. (UPI/Bettmann)



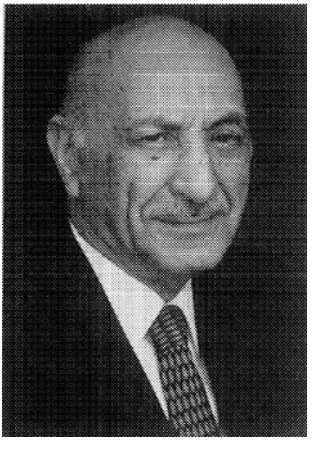
Vladimir Khryuchkov played a central role in the Soviet decision to intervene in Afghanistan as director of the KGB's Foreign Intelligence Directorate in 1979. Later, as KGB director, he led the forces in Moscow opposed to a coalition government in Kabul in which Communist Party control would be diluted. (Reuters/Bettmann)

President Najibullah of Afghanistan meets Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow on August 23, 1990. Najibullah remained in power for four years after Soviet troops started to withdraw in May 1988. (Reuters/Bettmann)

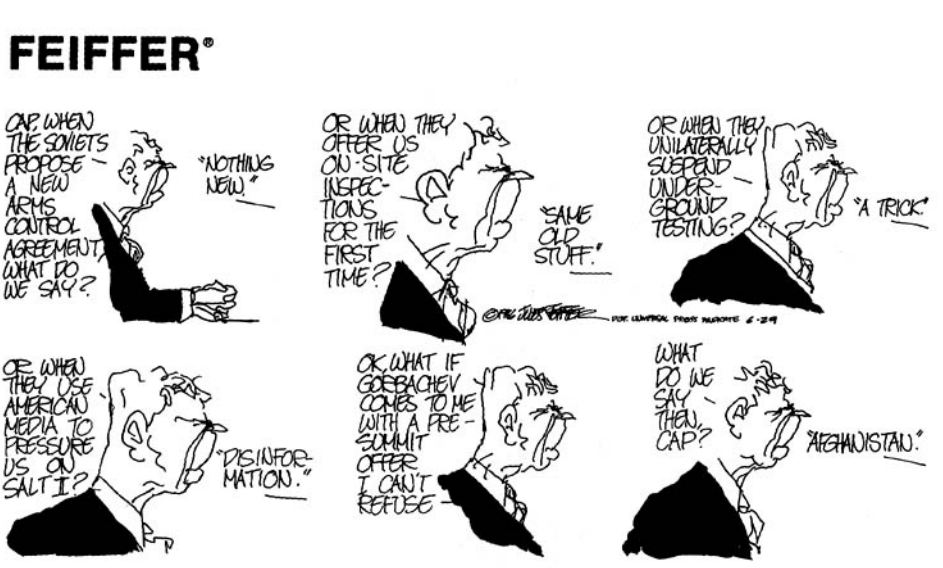
Addressing a group of Afghan refugee leaders in Peshawar, Pakistan, Diego Cordovez explains the provisions of the Geneva Accords relating to the return of 2.5 million refugees displaced by the Afghan conflict. (United Nations Photo)



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Islamic fundamentalist Hezb-i-Islami faction, who received the lion's share of the $2.8 billion in U.S. military and economic support funneled through Pakistani intelligence agencies to Afghan resistance groups. (Reuters/Bettmann)



Polls conducted in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan showed that former King Zahir Shah (above) was the overwhelming choice to head a coalition government in Kabul following the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Islamic fundamentalist Afghan leaders spearheaded opposition to efforts by Diego Cordovez to promote such a government. (Photo courtesy of Sultan Ghazi)


FEIFFER®
CAP, WHEN THE SOVIETS PROPOSE A NEW ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT, WHAT DO WE SAY?
"NOTHING NEW."
OR WHEN THEY OFFER US ON-SITE INSPECTIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME?
"SAME OLD STUFF."
OR WHEN THEY UNILATERALLY SUSPEND UNDERGROUND TESTING?
"A TRICK."
OR WHEN THEY USE AMERICAN MEDIA TO PRESSURE US ON SALT II?
"DISINFORMATION."
OK, WHAT IF GOEBACHEV COMES TO ME WITH A PRE-SUMMIT OFFER I CAN'T REFUSE —
WHAT DO WE SAY — THEN, CAP?
"AFGHANISTAN."

Conversation between President Ronald Reagan and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. (FEIFFER copyright © 1986 by JULES FEIFFER. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved.)

A Pakistani view of the superpower role in Afghanistan. (*The Muslim,* Islamabad, December 10, 1985)

But what I had been told in Moscow had not happened. Then, at 6:00 P.M., the BBC reported that Babrak Karmal had resigned, citing health reasons, as General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. He would continue to hold two largely ceremonial posts.

Karmal was replaced by Major General Najibullah, a thirty-nine-year-old former medical student who had headed KHAD, the Afghan intelligence agency and secret police, until 1985, when he was appointed party secretary in charge of security. He became a Central Committee member in 1975 and joined the Revolutionary Council after the revolution of 1978. He was appointed Ambassador to Iran, where he served briefly until he was forced to resigned after being accused of plotting against the then dominant Khalq faction of the Party. Najibullah returned to Kabul with the Soviet invasion in 1979.

Dost had left Kabul a few days earlier and had made a stopover in Moscow. When we met he seemed composed and dignified. He said that Karmal, to whom he was related, was still President. I did not pursue the discussion until a few days later, and he then told me that Karmal had resigned to promote unity in party ranks.

From a professional standpoint, the negotiations were intense, businesslike, and thorough. There were no procedural difficulties of any kind, a satisfactory degree of give-and-take, and a level of understanding on critical issues that had never existed before. There were also unprecedented episodes of tension and bad temper. The negotiations centered exclusively on Instrument IV, and I suggested that we work toward a full text of the paper and only then focus on the time frame for withdrawal.

In connection with the principles and objectives of the settlement, Dost suggested that we replace the text that had been agreed upon in 1982 with the seven principles of the "Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations," which, he said, was "more complete." I recommended that the proposal be accepted because the Declaration was a prestigious document that had been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. Its reference to self-determination was stronger than the one we had in our text. Pakistan agreed but pointed out that the Declaration did not have a principle on the return of refugees. "That is not a principle, it is a right," said Dost. We then prepared a text that implied that the return of refugees was both a principle and a right.

The legal status of the instrument was settled with unexpected speed when Yuri Kolossov, a lawyer of the Soviet foreign ministry who had come to Geneva for the first time, suggested that it be signed by Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also by the United States and the Soviet Union as witnesses. He provided a draft of the relevant provision, which was readily accepted by Pakistan. In just a few seconds we thus settled a problem that had worried the United States and the Pakistanis for a long time—and rightly so, because the Soviets had consistently maintained that they would not sign anything.

Dost very forcefully argued that Iran should be party to the settlement. I

urged him not to give Iran a virtual veto and predicted that if he continued to insist, Pakistan and the United States might request that the *mujahideen* also be party to the settlement.

With regard to the interrelationships, it was possible, not without long arguments, to prepare a suitable text that reflected accurately the "policy mechanism" (the chart), as well as my draft memorandum of understanding. In the paragraph on withdrawal Yaqub said he preferred the word *phased* to *gradual* because it was a better translation of the Russian word "postrennyii." He also wanted to lift from the Afghan paper that Dost had given me in Kabul the idea that one third of the troops should be withdrawn in the first phase. Dost agreed to refer the proposal to Kabul for approval. The provision of what Yaqub had called a "margin" of thirty days, in case the withdrawal could not be completed for technical reasons, was deleted.

There were the usual arguments about words. I think we spent a whole afternoon trying to decide whether the text should say that the settlement had been "concluded" or "finalized." We also had endless, and inconclusive, discussions about the title of the instrument. Toward the middle of the second week we essentially had an agreed text.

But there was a big problem concerning paragraph 7, on "monitoring," formally referred to as the "procedures to ensure implementation." Monitoring had first been mentioned in the preliminary outline of the settlement, and Armacost had periodically told me that the United States believed that the settlement should include effective arrangements for that purpose.

I had discussed the matter with General Dibuama, the U.N. Military Adviser, and we had started to work out a number of schemes. But I had always felt that the Soviets would refuse to consider any kind of verification of the withdrawal. They had consistently opposed, as a matter of principle, the involvement of the U.N. in any kind of monitoring action and would certainly reject any suggestion that their own military operations be checked by the organization.

In the draft of Instrument IV we had therefore proposed that a high-level joint commission of Pakistanis and Afghans be established as a standing mechanism for consultations on any problems that might arise during the period of implementation. Representatives of the guarantors would participate in the work of the joint commission if so invited, and the Personal Representative of the Secretary General would assist the joint commission at its request.

Although Yaqub had at first been very interested in monitoring, I subsequently realized that he had become much more cautious. I once told Armacost that Yaqub's concept of a monitoring mechanism was an eighty-year-old retired Scandinavian colonel, paraplegic and preferably blind, living in Islamabad and relying for communications exclusively on the Pakistani telephone system! Armacost evidently told Yaqub that the United States attached considerable importance to monitoring, and Yaqub accordingly proposed in Geneva that, instead of a joint commission, the U.N. or another "third party," perhaps a committee of governments, be asked to monitor implementation.

The problem was that Dost felt very strongly that monitoring should apply only to the noninterference obligations and should be carried out exclusively

through bilateral consultations between the two governments. During the negotiations both sides changed their stances significantly. Dost accepted a marginal involvement of the U.N. and Yaqub accepted some form of bilateral consultations. At one point there was a frantic competition to produce "new" versions of paragraph 7, but at the beginning of the third week there were still wide differences of approach and language.

At that point Yaqub suggested that the monitoring question be put aside in order to consider the time frame for withdrawal. He said that if Afghanistan's position on the time frame had not changed, the drafting process "would look like a farce." Dost first tried to force a continuation of the discussion on monitoring, but Yaqub insisted that the time had come for an exchange on the time frame for withdrawal. Dost then reiterated Afghanistan's proposal of a two-phase, four-year time frame.

Yaqub considered that Dost's proposal and arguments were "perverse, utterly ridiculous, and totally unacceptable." He added that he would refuse to consider anything until Kabul had ceased "to torpedo the negotiations, make a mockery of the U.N., and abuse your patience and tolerance." He would consult President Zia as to whether he should return immediately to Islamabad.

I called Kozirev and was told by the Soviet mission that he was not there and would not be available for the rest of the day. He had mentioned to me that he was annoyed because his Government's replies to his cables were taking a very long time. We were able to ascertain that he had left for Moscow. I continued to urge Dost to show some flexibility and made every effort to retain Yaqub in Geneva. He said that the time frame should be three or four months. Dost said that this was "childish."

There we were when Kozirev finally returned. We walked in the U.N. garden, and he seemed very worried, as if his trip had not been very successful, but he told me that Dost would make a "token" move. He seemed to know that Yaqub and his delegation had airline bookings for that evening but said that his Government could not accept any threats. I promised to try to reduce the tension.

I told Dost that if I could only say to Yaqub that the Afghan proposal on the time frame was negotiable I was sure that we could suspend the round in a better atmosphere. I noted that even direct talks did not seem to be a sufficient incentive to move forward. "There is a reason for that," Dost replied enigmatically. He added that his proposal was indeed negotiable and that he was ready to cut the length of the time frame by six months. When I conveyed the proposal to Yaqub he calmed down, and we were able to discuss the arrangements for the suspension of the round. We agreed to resume the negotiations in August.

X

"I am totally cynical about Soviet performance at the last round of negotiations," said Armacost on June 10 at the outset of a conversation in his office. The Soviets' "unforthcoming" attitude on the time frame and the appointment of

Najibullah were such bad signals, in Armacost's opinion, that they "should be thrown back at them."

I asked Armacost, as the experienced diplomat that he is, to come up with a reason for the Soviets to go to Geneva with a senior lawyer to settle most of the crucial aspects of the only remaining instrument if they did not want a settlement. "You and I know," I said, "that a skilled diplomat could have prolonged the consideration of that document for years." I myself was confused, I conceded, and personally offended by the time frame proposal, but it was evident that sooner or later the Soviets would be required to indicate the "real" time frame. That was the assumption on which we should continue to press them.

There was a barrage of negative comments about the negotiations. Elaine Sciolino reported in the *New York Times* of June 29 that a Pakistani diplomat had said that "[i]t is as if we have a contract for an apartment without the length of the lease and the amount of the rent." Contrary to my understanding with Zia and Yaqub, Prime Minister Junejo disclosed during an official visit to Washington that the Soviet Union had offered a four-year time frame.[12]

During the weeks that elapsed between the May round of negotiations and the August round of negotiations I made sustained efforts to facilitate the solution, or disappearance, of a number of problems that could delay the consideration of the "real" time frame and the conclusion of the settlement. I even tried to extract another statement from the Iranians, but Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Larijani said: "Why do you want to pin us down? It is better for you if we remain a wild card. We will see what we can do when a settlement is nearer."

On the consultations with the refugees, which had become a recurring headache, Dost had not appeared at the May round as negative as before, and we had been able to prepare a set of procedures. But Yaqub insisted that I or a member of my staff should be involved, whereas Dost maintained that only staff of the UNHCR should participate in the exercise.

Back in New York I had sent a message to Yaqub suggesting that a U.N. official go to Pakistan to consult with the competent authorities and with the staff of the High Commissioner stationed in Pakistan about the logistical aspects of the proposed consultations. I expected that a positive report might facilitate agreement at the August round. The Pakistanis started once again to say that it would be better to conduct the consultations once there was agreement on the time frame for withdrawal. It was the same old story. I decided to cancel the fact-finding trip.

Dost sent me a message requesting that I transmit to Yaqub a suggestion concerning the border issue. (I felt that the message in itself was encouraging in the sense that perhaps the Afghans were also trying to clear the decks in preparation for a settlement.) Dost presumably decided to send the message because in Geneva, during a brief exchange on the subject, Yaqub had indicated that he might consider a new formula. It was during the period when both sides were eager to appear flexible.

Dost's proposal related to the reference to the border in the operative part of the bilateral agreement on noninterference. He wanted to replace this clause

with a more general formulation of the principle of the inviolability of borders in the preamble of the agreement. As expected, Yaqub replied that the suggestion was not logical. "It would be highly anomalous," he said, "if the agreement on noninterference and nonintervention were to delete the reference, in the operative part, to the border across which acts of interference and intervention are not to occur."

Most of my time was spent talking to Safronchuk about monitoring. I also discussed the subject with Vorontzov when he came to New York for a special General Assembly on Africa. I told them that in my view the responsibility of ensuring that the settlement was faithfully implemented should be vested in the parties, as requested by Kabul, but that, to *assist* them, there should be a third-party mechanism, preferably the U.N., to establish the facts in an impartial manner.

Safronchuk was very familiar with his Government's position and policies regarding the U.N. The Soviet Union had maintained an inflexible attitude on the subject since the Korean War. A complicating factor was that verification had become a controversial issue in arms control negotiations between the superpowers. On the other hand, the Soviet Government had recently shown some inclination to change its rigid position of principle on U.N. operations by voting affirmatively, for the first time, to extend the U.N. peace-keeping force in Lebanon and had invited the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect the Chernobyl power plant. The monitoring of the withdrawal was, of course, especially sensitive. "I don't understand U.S. insistence on this," he repeatedly told me, "because they have very sophisticated equipment to watch what we will be doing." Safronchuk and Vorontsov were undoubtedly trying to bring about a change of attitude in Moscow.

As the date of the August round approached, I had very confusing signals from all sides. A friend who came back from Moscow brought me rather depressing news: There was tension within the Government, problems with the military, and increasing difficulties with Kabul. Moreover, there was a perception that the United States believed that the Soviets were desperately trying to get out from Afghanistan, and the reaction—typical in the relationship between the superpowers—was "to show the Americans that we will not withdraw at any price." During a chat in my apartment, Flora Lewis, the highly respected foreign affairs commentator for the *New York Times,* told me that she had gathered in Moscow that Gorbachev had not consolidated his authority and had many problems with the military.

But British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in a long conversation with Gorbachev, had reached the conclusion that he was working hard to reach a settlement. A British diplomat told me that when Thatcher raised the subject of Afghanistan, Gorbachev had emphasized the difficulties that he was encountering. Thatcher had subsequently told her advisers that, as a politician, she was impressed by the sincerity of that answer. Qian Qichen sent me a message to the effect that while not much progress had been achieved in Soviet-Chinese matters, he had detected "a certain flexibility on Afghanistan." In Washington there

was yet another internal debate about the advisability of sending more arms to Afghanistan as a means of forcing a withdrawal. *Le Monde* might have called it "le style Reagan."

All the reports that I received at the time indicated that in Islamabad the Geneva negotiations and Yaqub personally were under strong criticism—thus the negative statements to the press. I was told by many Western diplomats that President Zia's attitude toward the negotiations was "temporarily luke warm" because he was convinced that a settlement would help Benazir Bhutto, who had returned to Pakistan from exile. Relations with the resistance were particularly tense and had not improved after a briefing of the *mujahideen* leaders by Yaqub.

Everything seemed to move, however, in slow motion. (I used to call it Eastern Standard Timing.) Yet everybody wanted the round of negotiations to be resumed on the scheduled date. I sent messages to Yaqub and to Dost suggesting a postponement if they were not ready to tackle "the very difficult questions that are outstanding," but both answered that the date should not be changed.

Just two days before the August round of negotiations, which started on July 31, Gorbachev made a major foreign policy statement in Vladivostok. He announced the withdrawal of six regiments from Afghanistan, stressing the expectation that this unilateral step would be answered by the curtailment of outside interference. He also supported the setting up of a government with the participation "of political forces which find themselves outside the country's borders."[13]

In London, on the way to Geneva, I told Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary, that the withdrawal of six regiments was "an insignificant step in the right direction." I felt, however, that Gorbachev had given clear indications of his determination to bring about significant changes in Kabul. Only a few days before, on July 19, Najibullah, in an interview with Mushahid Hussain, the editor of *The Muslim,* had said: "We are prepared to talk to those who are in the opposition with an open political heart."[14]

When we assembled in Geneva, we again encountered a very reluctant Dost, who was not ready to move boldly either on the time frame or on monitoring. But Yaqub did not seem too worried.

The one encouraging development was that I did not have to press Dost to talk about the time frame. Just as soon as we met, he made what I described as another token move: He proposed that one half of the "contingent" should withdraw in one year and the other half in two more years. I suggested that he propose, to begin giving credibility to his position, that two thirds of the troops withdraw in one year and one third in one more year. He said that this was impossible. Yaqub was pleased that there was movement and suggested twice, in private, that I persuade the Soviets to propose a one-year time frame. I had been told in Washington that the United States would probably consider that a "decent" withdrawal period. Kozirev told me not to worry, that the "real" time frame would be "fine." He repeatedly pointed out that Pakistan's insistence on four months made his job much more difficult. "Yaqub's position is as unrealistic as Dost's," he said.

On monitoring, I was pleased to learn from Kozirev that my long hours of discussion with Safronchuk had not been wasted. "Our friends in Moscow are inclined to accept your ideas," he said, and suggested that I send a more detailed written proposal.

XI

Back in New York, with the excellent advice of General Dibuama, I devoted many long days and nights to the preparation of a detailed proposal on monitoring. It was sent to my interlocutors, to Moscow, and to Washington on September 3. The scheme was based upon the assumption that not even two thousand U.N. observers would be able to control the long and highly permeable border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and to supervise at the same time the withdrawal of more than one hundred thousand Soviet troops. The idea was to have spot checks that would prove that implementation was taking place and thus promote the atmosphere of confidence that is indispensable in order for a settlement to achieve its objectives.

The scheme envisaged that in addition to the participation of a (civilian) Representative of the Secretary General who would act throughout the implementation of the settlement as a political adviser to the parties, a senior military officer would head two small units, one located in Afghanistan and the other in Pakistan. These units would conduct inspections whenever a violation was alleged to have occurred or on authority of the senior military officer if he felt that the settlement was not being strictly observed. Meetings of the parties would be convened as soon as the report of an inspection had been submitted.

The military staff required was to be seconded from other U.N. peacekeeping operations. To satisfy Moscow and Kabul concerns about "internationalization" of the conflict, the Security Council's involvement would be minimal; the Council would not even hold a formal meeting. To authorize the redeployment of military staff, there would be an exchange of letters between the Secretary General and the President of the Council, who would consult the members informally. That would be all.

"It is as if two trains will depart simultaneously from a station on two parallel tracks separated by a wall," I told Safronchuk when I gave him the paper. "All I am suggesting is to place an observer on top of the wall to certify that the trains are running and to tell the conductor of each of them that the other train is moving." He was not very sure that my railroad explanation would "wash" in Moscow.

A few days later Safronchuk told me that my paper had been accepted. I immediately suggested to Yaqub and to Dost that I travel to Islamabad and Kabul toward the end of the year to discuss the monitoring arrangements and regulations. Knowing that the Soviets would reject an officer from a NATO country as head of the operation, I asked Safronchuk if his Government would prefer an Austrian, a Swiss, or a Finn. He said that somebody from Finland might be best.

Although we seemed to be moving on the question of monitoring, I was concerned because the tone and substance of Soviet-American relations oscillated sharply between conciliation and acrimony. Throughout much of 1986 Reagan and Gorbachev had tried to fix a date for a second summit meeting but had encountered many difficulties. In August the "Daniloff affair" dramatized the fragility of superpower relations and threatened to revive Cold War tensions. Gennadi Zakharov, a Soviet official of the U.N. Secretariat, was arrested in New York and accused of espionage. Nicholas Daniloff, a correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report,* was arrested in Moscow and similarly charged. On September 29 Daniloff was released, and the following day Zakharov was returned home. Their release was followed by a totally unexpected announcement that Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed to meet in Reykjavik, Iceland, on October 11.

At one point the Reykjavik meeting appeared to hold promise of a historic breakthrough on arms control, but it ended in failure. The disappointment and bitterness that prevailed when Reagan and Gorbachev left Iceland on October 12 virtually ensured that Gorbachev would not visit Washington before the end of the year as tentatively planned.[15]

I told all the Soviets who came to New York for the General Assembly the obvious—that in such circumstances neither the United States, nor indeed anybody else, would believe that they were seriously considering withdrawing form Afghanistan unless they proposed a short time frame. We were told that Afghanistan had not been discussed by the principals in Reykjavik and that a brief talk on the subject by advisers had been inconsequential. But Vladimir Petrovky, who had become Deputy Foreign Minister, told me that Gorbachev had spoken at the Soviet Foreign Ministry—in itself an unprecedented event—in a way that had shaken diplomats because of the range and the depth of his foreign-policy plans. A solution of the Afghan conflict, he assured me, was very high on Gorbachev's agenda. At a lunch in Perez de Cuellar's residence, Shevardnadze made a toast in which he said that my efforts would be concluded very soon.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the controversy over the time frame was caused, in the main, by fears on both sides that once the settlement was concluded there would be renewed attempts to seek a military victory. Kabul was afraid that the *mujahideen* would strike just as soon as a short withdrawal was completed, and Pakistan was concerned that a long withdrawal would allow the Soviets to liquidate the resistance. "Since withdrawal is meant to begin at the same time that outside support for the resistance ends, the question becomes this: How long do the departing Russians get to clobber a resistance cut off from reinforcements and fresh supplies?" asked Stephen Rosenfeld, writing from Islamabad for the *Washington Post.*[16]

In the meantime there had been several reports that Najibullah was trying to contact many Afghans—no longer referred to as "ringleaders," "rebels," or "counterrevolutionaries" but as "members of the opposition"—as well as former King Zahir Shah and field commanders. Najibullah was also trying to cut the supply lines to the resistance in Pakistan and Iran.

I told Yaqub when we met at a mutual friend's home that if Najibullah succeeded in the efforts in which he was engaged there might be no need to

conclude a settlement. He conceded that Kabul was cleverly exploiting tribal differences, appealing to the country's Islamic traditions, and even using cash bribes to erode popular support for the *mujahideen*. But he felt that none of such tactics could succeed.

In the Secretary General's 1985 report on Afghanistan it was stressed that tangible progress had been made during the year: Procedural questions had been laid aside, the four instruments that would make up the settlement were virtually complete, and on the outstanding issues there was "some movement away from the starting point" that the parties had originally adopted. "Bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation will indeed be needed," added the report, "to ensure that the settlement commands the support of all segments of the Afghan people."[17]

The resolution condemning Soviet actions was again adopted by 122 votes, with 20 against and 22 abstentions.[18] Kozirev told me that he had suggested in Moscow—I suppose half-jokingly—that the Soviet Union vote in favor of the resolution. "It basically provides that we withdraw out troops," he had said, "and we are ready to do it."

XII

On November 17 I left New York. Before proceeding to Islamabad I made a stopover in London for consultations with the British Government. In my discussions with the representatives of the European Community in New York I had detected an increasing inclination, their deep suspicions notwithstanding, to begin to believe that a settlement was possible. Sir Geoffrey Howe confirmed that Western European diplomats felt that the Soviet Union evidently had the will to make a dramatic change but questioned whether it was willing to pay the price. The British had also ascertained that Najibullah had initiated an "overture to the *mujahideen*."

In Islamabad we were able in a relatively short time to agree on the monitoring arrangements. The Pakistanis had as usual done their homework and were ready with a few remarks and drafting suggestions that did not present serious problems. At lunch U.S. Ambassador Deane Hinton, in a jovial mood at the birth of a new son—his twelfth!—made abundantly clear that the United States would contemplate no timetable longer than three months and would do its best to keep Pakistan in line.

Although other Western Ambassadors told me that there was increasing domestic pressure on the Government of Pakistan to reach a settle as soon as possible, I was not very hopeful when I met President Zia. After the initial courtesies, I told him that I was very pleased because we had been able to persuade the Soviets to change their long-standing position on monitoring. I said I wanted to have a good talk on the time frame for withdrawal because, if there was an agreement on monitoring, the time frame would be the only remaining item. I wished to leave the area, I said, with the positions of the two sides on the time frame "within negotiating range."

It was extremely difficult for me to promote an agreement on the time frame, I said, if I did not know Pakistan's bottom line. I had intended to make a concrete proposal, but a conversation with U.S. Ambassador Hinton had dissuaded me from doing so. Pakistan had, however, accepted my six-month time frame proposal, which was included in the draft of a memorandum of understanding. It had subsequently reverted to its original stance and had maintained in Geneva that a time frame of more than three months would be unacceptable. I told the President that I was very conscious of the sensitivity of the subject and that therefore I would not disclose Pakistan's position. I only needed to know what it was it in order to work out a reasonable compromise with the Soviets.

President Zia said that he had no "moral compunctions" on the subject and that "any reasonable time frame" would be acceptable. Speaking very slowly and carefully choosing his words, he added that Pakistan would accept any reasonable time frame "within months" and added that "on that basis" he was ready to give me "carte blanche" for my discussions with the Soviets.

It was clear enough. I therefore turned briefly to the most recent developments in Kabul. Babrak Karmal had relinquished the posts that he still held in the government and the party, and Zia was, of course, aware of Najibullah's recent moves. He asked me to tell the Soviets that Afghanistan could not afford to have an anti-Soviet government but that the Afghan soul would not accept an outside solution. I said that I had explained to the Soviets several times that he had refused to have any dealings with Karmal for well-known reasons. "But now he is gone," I pointedly added. "The elephant has passed the door, and only its tail remains," he joked when we said good-bye.

On the way back to Islamabad from the President's residence in Rawalpindi, Yaqub, who was riding in a car just behind me, suddenly passed mine and led the "caravan" to his private residence. When we arrived, he said he thought we could have tea together. He was accompanied by Najmuddin Shaikh, and I had my assistants with me. In an informal forty-minute conversation Yaqub attempted to temper the impression left by the President's remarks, saying that the President might have given me carte blanche—but that he had not. He told me that what the President had said was an elegant way of informing me that Pakistan would go along with a reasonable time frame stated in months. "That means six months," he added with great emphasis, "not eleven months as you might think." I told Yaqub that I had heard what the President had said.

My discussions in Kabul were similarly smooth on the question of monitoring. Dost did want to make sure that the scheme would not require a Security Council debate and formal approval. Having agreed on a number of adjustments, the two interlocutors gave me their formal approval to a comprehensive memorandum of understanding on monitoring.

At that point Gorbachev made the most categorical statement yet on the attitude of his Government towards the Afghan settlement. Before leaving on an official visit to India, he said in reply to a question by an Indian journalist, inter alia, the following:

> We stand for a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. The Afghan government also has such an attitude. What is being done under the U.N. sponsorship—I mean the mission of Cordovez—is a real process. It can be a success and lead to political settlement if, of course, Pakistan and the United States are for a political settlement. But so far we see that as soon as the process begins to show signs of progress towards a settlement, they immediately take measures to thwart it. I nevertheless think that the day is not far off when the question of the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan is resolved. This will simultaneously mean the solution of the question of the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan.

During his stay in New Delhi, Gorbachev said that he thought there were "new developments both in the Cordovez mission and in the striving of other states, including the Soviet Union, to have [the Afghan] problem settled."[19] This showed only that he was being kept informed on a daily basis of progress in the diplomatic process concerning the Afghan conflict.

It was a propitious moment to raise with Dost and Najibullah the question of the time frame for withdrawal. Najibullah did not receive me at the palace, where all my meetings with Karmal had taken place. Our discussion was held at a residence similar to the one in which I usually stayed. A stocky man in army fatigues, Najibullah spoke in a firm but even voice. After stressing his determination to ensure that my efforts would succeed, he charged that Pakistan had been used as a tool and that its "surrender to Stingers" was not serving the cause of peace. Pakistan's position during the negotiations had been marked by a constant "zigzag" (he spoke that word in English) that showed its lack of sincerity. Afghanistan had taken certain measures of national reconciliation that were to be followed by others, which constituted "our people's demands." On the other hand, Kabul was not seeking peace at any price—these were issues of "sacred interest."

I praised the steps of national reconciliation that he had taken, stressing that such steps were part and parcel of the "convergent measures" that were not to be included the settlement but that were essential to conclude it. I was unable, however, to get him to say anything specific about the time frame.

I then told him that I intended to meet the seven *mujahideen* leaders in Peshawar to inform them of the progress achieved in the negotiations. He replied that through "certain channels" he was keeping them informed of his proposals for national reconciliation. The meeting then came to a cordial end.

I had mentioned to Kozirev the idea of visiting the Peshawar leaders before my meeting with Najibullah. He first thought about it and then said, "Why do you have to tell him—just go ahead and do it!" The meeting with Najibullah was so friendly, however, and he put so much emphasis on national reconciliation that I felt that it would be better if my "consultation" with the refugee leaders was carried out with his knowledge.

I raised the subject again with Dost. He was astounded, obviously unable to answer, and probably afraid of saying the wrong thing. I said: "Fine, you don't have to say anything, you don't know anything, I will just say that Najibullah knew what I intended to do."

I then asked him to tell me confidentially Afghanistan's bottom line on the time frame. "One half in one year and the rest in another year," he replied. I tried to persuade him to change to two thirds in one year and the rest in another year, but after an unpleasant half hour I gave up. "You and Pakistan are not within negotiating range," I said, "and I am afraid that you will not be able to resolve this matter in one more round of negotiations."

Dost refused to accept the idea of saying in the Note for the Record that both Pakistan and Afghanistan had agreed that the time frame should be "short." I had argued that the definition of "short" would emerge during the negotiations. He evidently felt that the statement could be used by Pakistan to exert additional pressure—which was, of course, the underlying purpose of my proposal. I then suggested, and he reluctantly agreed, that the Note say that the two governments had agreed to examine the question "with an open mind."

When I told Yaqub the language that I had suggested in Kabul for the Note for the Record, he turned to one of his advisers and asked: "Are you worried about the open mind?" I then told Yaqub that since we had been unable to agree on a procedure for the consultations with the refugees, I had decided to take a shortcut and hold a meeting with the Peshawar leaders. I was thus responding to a request that Pakistan had made for years. "Bravo!" said Yaqub, and promised to organize the meeting forthwith.

In the meantime I went to Teheran in a Pakistan Air Force C-130 aircraft that President Zia made available to me. It was the same aircraft in which he died two years later. The flight took five hours each way over a barren desert, skirting the Afghan border via Quetta and Zahedan. We landed in Teheran shortly after noon on Thanksgiving Day.

I held discussions with Deputy Foreign Minister Larijani and with Foreign Minister Velayati. Larijani had been engaging for some time in talks with the Soviets that were gradually improving the bilateral relations between the two governments. "If Iran had some reservations about the Geneva process, it did not mean that Iran would prescribe that the Soviets should stay in Afghanistan until a perfect solution was found," he told me.

Both Larijani and Velayati said that the Soviets had been "rethinking" their policies in the region. Velayati said he had heard rumors that the Soviet Union wanted to bring back the former King. This was something the Iranians disliked much more, he added, than the presence of Soviet troops in the territory of their neighbor. I received all the necessary, albeit characteristically implicit, assurances that as long as the Soviets withdrew, the Iranians would support the settlement. After the long flight back, I landed in Islamabad at midnight.

The following morning I again met with Yaqub, who told me that he was expecting a telephone call regarding the arrangements for my meeting with the "Peshawar Seven." He said that the meeting would have to be followed by another one once the time frame had been agreed upon. I replied that two meetings had never been envisaged. At that point he was called out to take a telephone call.

Returning after approximately twenty minutes, Yaqub said that four of the seven leaders were "not available" and that he doubted the usefulness of meeting

their deputies. "Under the circumstances the possibility of a successful meeting would be greatly prejudiced," he added. I told him that we all expected to hold only one more round of negotiations and that for me to come to Pakistan to meet the leaders was politically and practically unthinkable.

A rather unpleasant discussion ensued, particularly because of the remarks made by some of Yaqub's advisers to the effect that it was not Pakistan's fault if the meeting was not arranged. "For years you have been asking me to do this," I told them, "and you had plenty of time to arrange it." The Foreign Minister cut the discussion short, stating that the Government would talk to the leaders "at the appropriate time." I then left for New York.

Two days after my return I read that Dost had been replaced. I had noticed that Dost looked extremely subdued and that he was much more frequently than before accompanied by Yuresh. Yet another change in the cast of characters, I thought. Would it be the last? Dost and I had become good friends, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances in which we had to work. I was sure that I would miss him at such a crucial stage in the negotiations.

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VI

1987–1988

THE END GAME

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10

REALPOLITIK VINDICATED

Selig S. Harrison

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power on March 11, 1985, disengagement from Afghanistan was one of his central objectives. Yet it was not until three years later, on April 14, 1988, that the Geneva accords were concluded. Why, I asked him, did it take so long to bring about the Soviet withdrawal? How serious was the opposition from Soviet hard-liners who wanted to continue the war? Would a more positive American attitude toward the U.N. negotiations have made an earlier withdrawal possible?

"Actually," Gorbachev replied, "it would have been a very great stimulus if the United States had recognized that we were serious and had shown a desire to help us get out through the U.N. process. It would have facilitated the situation a lot in dealing with people who were causing difficulties." To my surprise, he minimized the power of the prowar lobby in Moscow. "Yes, yes," he said, "but this wasn't the main problem. Don't forget Kabul. Remember that Karmal headed the Afghan government. He was a very particular personality, and he had his own agenda. In view of this, I am afraid that even with the backing of the United States we would have had a very difficult time. With Najibullah it was different. I don't think the world has appreciated what he did in bringing around his colleagues to accept my view. A person of lesser ability would not have been able to do it."[1]

Talking with Gorbachev and his principal former advisers in March 1993, I found differences of emphasis concerning the strength of the prowar lobby but general agreement that the most difficult obstacles to disengagement were not in Moscow but in Washington, Islamabad, and, above all, Kabul.

"The American attitude undoubtedly prolonged the war," declared Aleksandr Yakovlev, who presided over the Foreign Policy Commission of the Central Committee. "The United States gave us a kind of ultimatum to leave unconditionally. That made it difficult for us because we couldn't leave as if we were

defeated. A different American attitude would have helped Gorbachev to deal with the pressures that he faced. We probably could have solved the problem during 1985, but of course history does not like the subjunctive mood."

Yakovlev distinguished between pressures from the armed forces as such and from "the military-industrial complex, all those interests tied into our military production. Just as in your country, these people can make their influence felt. But Gorbachev had his powers and his strengths, and he used them very carefully to prepare the government and public opinion for getting out."[2]

Anatoliy Chernyayev, another key Gorbachev adviser, emphasized that Andrei Gromyko was the only member of the Politburo who "frankly and openly" supported the war when Gorbachev took over in 1985. Referring to Gromyko and Yigor Ligachev, Chernyayev said that

> even Ligachev agreed that we had to get out somehow. Our problem was how to leave, and that was complicated by our confrontation with America. Gorbachev saw Afghanistan in relation to the threat of a war with the Western countries. We lived in an atmosphere that there *was* a threat, so we had to have a certain level of trust before we could leave Afghanistan. In my mind the Reykjavik summit in the fall of 1986 was a certain turning point in Soviet-American relations. For that reason, with U.S. cooperation I think the Afghan problem could have been settled in 1986, perhaps in the spring but in any case after Reykjavik when he [Gorbachev] was absolutely confident there would be no war.[3]

Gorbachev nodded when I told him what Chernyayev had said about Reykjavik, observing that "our two countries were going through a process together, a step-by-step comprehension of new realities. It was necessary to have a mutual experience of joint effort to produce trust between our leadership." As for whether the withdrawal could have come sooner, however, he remained cautious. "To be honest," he said, "the U.S. side was committed to a particular group of Afghans, just as we were, and I don't think that even if they had wanted to do so, they could have got the support of the *mujahideen* for the settlement we had both been negotiating with the United Nations. That was the problem all the way to the very end."

Apart from the might-have-beens of 1985 and 1986, the historical reality is that the Geneva negotiations were not, in fact, pursued to their conclusion until after the removal of Karmal and the consolidation of Najibullah's power in late 1986. Even then, an examination of the Afghan end game during 1987 and early 1988 shows that the Afghan political scene continued to be the focal point of Soviet, American, and Pakistani attention.

In deciding how fast to move toward withdrawal, Moscow came face-to-face with the problem of what would happen in the Afghan capital following the departure of Soviet forces. The major Soviet policy struggles over Afghanistan during the end game revolved around the aftermath of the withdrawal: whether to maintain and strengthen Najibullah and PDPA control of the Kabul regime or to accept some form of coalition in which Najibullah and the PDPA would be reduced to minority partners.

Kabul, for its part, remained hopeful until the eleventh hour that Soviet

forces would not really leave. Najibullah and his allies in Moscow did their best to delay the accords, hold out for a long withdrawal period, and sabotage a series of efforts by Cordovez to broker a coalition compromise in which PDPA control would be diluted. Their task was facilitated by Zia Ul-Haq's desire to install a fundamentalist-dominated Pakistani satellite regime in Kabul. Zia consistently rebuffed proposals that would have given former King Zahir Shah and moderate resistance elements a dominant position in a coalition with Najibullah and the PDPA. To Zia and the Pakistani-sponsored resistance groups, such a compromise would have handed to Moscow at the bargaining table what it had failed to achieve on the battlefield.

At first, the United States gave unqualified support to the Pakistani position. More important, as Washington began to take the possibility of a withdrawal seriously, it gradually backed away from its previous acceptance of the key clauses of the accords providing for a cutoff of military aid to the resistance beginning on "D-Day."

Faced with this American and Pakistani stand, Moscow nevertheless decided in the end to conclude the Geneva accords. For Gorbachev, the accords still offered a desirable framework for the withdrawal because they contained what Moscow considered an essential face-saving feature: The Kabul regime that Moscow had intervened to support would remain in place with implicit international approval and would have an opportunity to survive with Soviet help.

Precisely for this reason, Islamabad made its eleventh-hour attempt to condition conclusion of the accords on the replacement of the Kabul regime. The Reagan Administration faced intense last-minute pressure from "bleeders" in Washington who shared Zia's view that signing the accords with Najibullah still in power would be a betrayal of the resistance. But Secretary of State Shultz insisted that negotiations on a new government could drag on indefinitely and that the American interest required the earliest possible withdrawal. Significantly, Shultz was able to persuade Reagan that the United States should sign by pointing to the CIA assessment that Najibullah would fall, in any case, soon after the last Soviet soldier left—a prophecy that was to prove embarrassingly out of touch with reality.

Can "Our Boys" Survive?: The Soviet Debate

As more and more bodies came back from Afghanistan, antiwar sentiment in the Soviet Union became increasingly vocal. In January 1987 one out of six people in Moscow surveyed in a government-sponsored opinion poll openly criticized the war, blaming it for widespread drug addiction and juvenile delinquency. "Gorbachev knew that public opinion had begun to crystallize," said Anatoliy Chernyayev in an interview. "He put pressure on the Politburo by circulating a flood of letters that were coming in, letters from generals and soldiers asking 'Why did you send us to Afghanistan?,' letters from mothers asking 'Why did you ruin my son, why did you spoil his mind and his soul?'"

During the spring of 1987 Gorbachev increased his freedom of action in dealing with Afghanistan by executing what Soviet specialist Jerry Hough has called "one of the most classic and rapid consolidations of power in Soviet history."[4] The climactic moment in this process came at a critical meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee on June 25. Gorbachev got the Committee to enlarge the membership of the Politburo from eleven to fourteen. Then he strengthened his Politburo majority by pushing through the election of Yakovlev and two other close allies as full voting members. All three of the new members held the rank of Secretary of the Central Committee. Their elevation to the Politburo upgraded the Central Committee Secretariat to the status of a personal staff under Gorbachev's direct supervision, comparable to the White House staff, thus enhancing the power of the party in its built-in rivalry with the cabinet. At the same time, Gorbachev found a fortuitous opportunity to replace Marshal Sergei Sokolov, a leading hard-liner, with a more cooperative Defense Minister, Dimitriy Yazov. Sokolov made an easy scapegoat in the embarrassing case of German pilot Mathias Rust, who eluded Soviet air defenses and landed his plane in Red Square on May 29.

A revealing glimpse of Soviet policy making during the Gorbachev years has been provided in a book coauthored by the late Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev and Georgiy Kornienko, former First Deputy Foreign Minister and later Special Adviser to the Central Committee. Akhromeyev and Kornienko seek to explain why Gorbachev's progress toward disengagement was so slow during 1987 despite his success in solidifying control of the Communist Party machinery. One of the major reasons, they say, was the conflict among Gorbachev's own supporters over how to maximize the chances that the Najibullah regime would either survive under PDPA control or be succeeded by another government friendly to Moscow.

According to their account, confirmed by a variety of other Soviet sources, Gorbachev had to decide between three clearly defined positions. Akhromeyev and Kornienko argued that Najibullah and the PDPA would not be able to retain power for long. In this view, Moscow should seek American and Pakistani support for a coalition with resistance factions in which the PDPA would be limited to a minority position. At the other end of the spectrum, Vladimir Khrychkov, who was promoted to KGB director by Gorbachev, believed that Najibullah would survive and wanted to maximize his power and that of the PDPA. In a variation of the KGB stand, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze called for broadening the base of the PDPA regime by giving a subordinate role to nonparty personalities who had not opposed the regime. The PDPA would retain control, with Najibullah remaining as the nonpartisan head of a "national coalition."

Kornienko said in an interview that he and Akhromeyev

> tried over and over again in meetings to convince Gorbachev that it wouldn't be possible to keep Najibullah in power. But Shevardnadze and Khrychkov kept saying that we had to avoid a bloodbath in which our friends would be slaughtered. They said we were unrealistic, and privately they told him we were troublemakers. Of course all of us wanted to avoid a bloodbath. But we thought the best way to do

this was to get a real coalition while we were still there to enforce it. The difficulty was that Khrychkov had personally chosen Najibullah to replace Karmal and felt he had to vindicate his judgment. Najibullah was the KGB's fair-haired boy.[5]

"Khrychkov didn't really want to withdraw at all," Yakovlev told me. "Practically every month he went to Afghanistan, and he always brought back material that he used to show us to prove that the war should go on. With Shevardnadze it was different. He wanted to withdraw, but he wanted to do what he thought was necessary to assure a smooth exit."

Shevardnadze served as chairman of the interagency Politburo Commission on Afghanistan, which had a mandate to arrange the withdrawal and to "maintain Afghanistan as a friendly state." Sergei Terasenko, his principal deputy, vigorously defended him, contending that Shevardnadze "used the Commission very effectively to push through measures which made the withdrawal possible, often in the face of opposition from various elements. Yes, there were policy differences between Shevardnadze and Kornienko. Theoretically, the Kornienko position looks more liberal, but it was utterly unrealistic. The 'Najibullah option' worked after all, did it not?"[6]

Kornienko and Akhromeyev depict Gorbachev as basically sympathetic to their position but vacillating and unwilling to have a showdown with Shevardnadze and Khrychkov. "In words, he went back and forth from one side to the other," they write, "but in substance almost complete freedom of action was granted to Shevardnadze and Khrychkov."[7] Yuli Vorontsov, who served as First Deputy Foreign Minister under Shevardnadze, explained that "truthfully, on many occasions Gorbachev simply didn't want to be bothered. He was very preoccupied with arms control in 1987, and he was quite happy to leave what he considered the details of Afghan policy to others."[8]

Repeated cases in which Shevardnadze and Khrychkov disregarded Gorbachev's apparent desires are cited by Kornienko and Akhromeyev and elaborated in a later study by Kornienko. When he told Najibullah in December 1986 that Moscow intended to withdraw, Gorbachev emphasized the need for a coalition "that would extend not only to conservative forces in general but would be designed primarily to attract the armed resistance groups." Nevertheless, Kornienko writes, when Shevardnadze visited Kabul on January 5, 1987, he "gave his blessing" to a much-heralded policy of "national reconciliation" that made only cosmetic gestures to the armed resistance groups.[9] Najibullah made clear soon after Shevardnadze's departure that "the PDPA, which is entrusted with the general political leadership of the society, will head the armed forces."[10] He added that "the commanders of the armed groups who are ready for reconciliation could join our armed forces" but did not specify what positions they could hold.[11] Nominally, Najibullah's "government of national unity" was open to all Afghan political elements, including the resistance groups, but for all practical purposes it embraced only those non-PDPA elements that had not been opposed to the PDPA.

Gorbachev had told Najibullah that the PDPA would have to be prepared to surrender "at least half of its real power" to nonparty elements, Kornienko

relates. But "Shevardnadze, talking to Najibullah, had emasculated this idea. Thus, instead of offering half of the real ministerial portfolios, including some of the key ones, they wanted to give the opposition only half-empty positions or meaningless titles with no power. Small wonder there was not a long line of those wanting such 'portfolios.'"[12]

Suspecting that Najibullah might be getting mixed signals from Moscow, Gorbachev summoned a high-level Afghan delegation to meet with him face-to-face on July 20, 1987. Several times he gave Najibullah variations of the same message: "You had better be ready in twelve months because we will be going whether you are ready or not. You must strengthen your political base." Vorontsov, who was present on this occasion, said that Najibullah seemed skeptical, and several members of his delegation left the meeting openly disgruntled. On the next day, Najibullah announced that the PDPA was prepared to relinquish twelve cabinet and subcabinet portfolios and the posts of vice president and deputy prime minister. But it would retain its control of the interior, defense, foreign affairs, and finance ministries, as well as the armed forces and the secret police.[13]

Soon after his return, Najibullah promulgated a new draft constitution that envisaged the legalization of political parties. However, the constitution made clear that the PDPA would remain in control. Article 4 designated the PDPA as "the organizer and guardian of the policy of national reconciliation." Article 5 specified that the PDPA-dominated National Front would be "the most extensive socio-political organization, uniting political parties and social organizations." Article 98 gave the President unlimited power to veto decisions of a projected National Assembly.[14]

One of the most significant controversies over the future of the Kabul regime centered on whether Najibullah should assume the position of head of state vacated by Babrak Karmal in December 1986. Karmal had held this honorific position for eight months following his replacement by Najibullah as General Secretary. Kornienko warned that making Najibullah president would "destroy once and for all the possibility of a coalition government." The post of president should be left open, he said, "perhaps for the former king, Zahir Shah." Gorbachev, "after some hesitation," agreed that Najibullah could serve as president, Kornienko writes, but suggested a compromise. Instead of running as a representative of the PDPA, the Afghan leader should give up his formal party posts and run as a nonpartisan national personality. Najibullah was very upset, and "once again, with the benevolence of his other Soviet patrons, he just ignored Gorbachev, publicly stating that he considered it 'reasonable to allot the post of president to the PDPA.'"[15] On September 30, 1987, the Revolutionary Council designated him as president.

During Najibullah's Moscow visit on November 6, 1987, Chernyayev recalls, Gorbachev suggested to him that he offer to step down as president if it would facilitate a coalition. Kornienko states that Gorbachev also urged Najibullah not to be a rubber-stamp candidate for president at the Loya Jirga, or national assembly, scheduled to be held several weeks thereafter in Kabul. When Gorbachev told him that three or four candidates should be nominated, Na-

jibullah did not object. However, he went "in an agitated state" to Shevardnadze and Khrychkov, who pacified him by saying that he had misunderstood Gorbachev. It would be enough, they reassured him, if three or four other parties joined with the PDPA in putting forward his own nomination.[16] At a predeparture press conference, Najibullah said that the PDPA did not claim "a monopoly of power" but would continue to retain the presidency and command of the armed forces "as long as bloodshed and war continue."[17]

By the time the withdrawal started in May 1988, Gorbachev had fully embraced the Shevardnadze-Khrychkov position. But Kornienko and Akhromeyev continued to push for a "real coalition" in which the PDPA would have "a legal but very modest place," recalling Najibullah's repeated offers to step down if necessary "in the interests of the nation." Shevardnadze angrily accused them of deviating from what was by then the established Politburo policy of all-out support for Najibullah. Finally, when Gorbachev removed him from all Afghan-related posts, Kornienko resigned from his position on the Central Committee staff, followed shortly by Akhromeyev, who had clashed with Gorbachev on other defense-related issues in addition to Afghanistan.[18]

Shevardnadze has frankly explained why he felt so strongly about the "Najibullah option." When the Geneva accords were signed, he writes,

> I must admit that my feelings were mixed and far from joyful. I saw the faces of my friends in Kabul. Now they had no one to rely on except themselves. Could they last after the withdrawal of our forces? How could they be helped to stop the bloodshed and restore peace? Thoughts about the people who had trusted us and who were now left all alone with their bitter enemies would give me no peace. . . . I could not rid myself of a sense of personal guilt toward my friends.[19]

Like Shevardnadze, Khrychkov and the other KGB officials who dealt most closely with Afghanistan were motivated primarily by personal feelings of loyalty to "our boys," according to Sergei Terasenko. "They had a lot of contacts there, built up over a number of years, people who trusted them. They used to say, 'what are we going to do with these people? What will happen to them?'"[20]

"Of course, we did feel obligations to the Afghans," Vorontsov said in an interview. "but our real concern was to make sure that everything did not fall apart the minute we left, which would have humiliated us. We wanted a stable transition, which meant that the government in place had to be broadened. You couldn't simply tear it down as the U.S. and Pakistan were demanding."

Should Moscow have been more flexible concerning the terms of a coalition, following Kornienko's lead? Vorontsov brushed the question aside, declaring that "we didn't really have that option, did we, because the American policy was very rigid and Najibullah had his own agenda. He clung to his base, he resisted all suggestions that he leave the party or dilute the control of the party. What he wanted was the reverse, to add to his base." Thus, Najibullah was ready to have Zahir Shah assume an honorific post in which he would be treated as "Father of the Nation," and nominees of the former King could join the government. But the PDPA would not surrender key positions. In October 1987, under Soviet pressure, Najibullah agreed to let the King choose the prime minister and the

interior minister, who controlled the police. The posts of foreign affairs minister and finance minister would be negotiable. But the presidency, the defense ministry, and the KHAD, or secret police, would remain in the hands of the PDPA.[21] "I talked with the King several times," said Vorontsov, "but he didn't agree to this, and perhaps, in retrospect, he was wise."

Najibullah's policy of "national reconciliation" went just far enough to antagonize hard-liners in the PDPA but not far enough to win over significant local tribal and ethnic leaders to support of his government. Reflecting the Shevardnadze approach, he gave relatively powerless posts to prominent non-PDPA personalities who had until then neither supported nor opposed the government. The most notable was Mohammed Hassan Sharq, a former Deputy Prime Minister in the Mohammed Daoud regime, who served briefly as Prime Minister. The Constitution adopted at the Loya Jirga in November 1987 established Islam as the state religion and proclaimed Afghanistan on paper, at least, to be a parliamentary democracy. PDPA-sponsored peasant and clerical parties and a variety of left-wing splinter groups were permitted to operate. But Najibullah retained undiminished powers as President and the ruling party retained its "organizing and leading role."

Soviet support was the critical factor that enabled Najibullah to dominate the PDPA as he did for six hectic years before and after the withdrawal. But as Gorbachev observed, even with Soviet support, "a person of lesser ability would not have been able to do it." A hard-driving man with a hefty, imposing physique that led to his nickname, "the Ox," Najibullah comes from an influential and educated family. His father was Afghan Trade Commissioner in Pakistan and his wife, Fattan, is a granddaughter of former King Abdur Rahman Khan. He studied medicine but left college to pursue politics before receiving his degree. When I met him in New York City in July 1988, I found him articulate and intelligent. Unlike Babrak Karmal, who drank heavily and worked when he felt like it, Najibullah had a reputation for self-discipline and a spartan private life.

In choosing Najibullah to replace Karmal, Moscow had expected him to be more cooperative in preparing for a Soviet withdrawal. But while he gave lip service to the goal of an early withdrawal in his meetings with Soviet officials, Najibullah did his best to slow down the pace of the Geneva negotiations. In particular, he resisted Soviet pressures to negotiate a reduction in the withdrawal time frame that would have moved the Geneva process along.

A special task force headed by three KGB generals was appointed to make sure that Najibullah understood Soviet intentions and would be ready in time. The task force set up shop in Kabul with a staff of experts, Vorontsov related, drew up military and economic battle plans for the defense of the regime, and negotiated a series of agreements with Najibullah for more and better Soviet aid. Warning that he could not rely on the loyalty of the Afghan Army, the KGB gave him the money and equipment to create a new presidential guard force with high salaries and big pensions, "nothing less than his own private army."

"We had to push him constantly," Vorontsov recalled. " We had to tell him over and over to hurry up. He simply didn't believe that we would get out so soon and that we would get out completely, leaving him entirely alone."

Can the Resistance Govern?: American Illusions

Moscow's internal battles over the future of the Kabul regime were influenced decisively by American and Pakistani policies. Washington and Islamabad strengthened Soviet supporters of the "Najibullah option" by ruling out alternatives that would have taken into account Soviet fears of a bloodbath. In addition to opposing a dominant role for the PDPA, the United States, following Pakistan's lead, also rejected the Kornienko-Akhromeyev concept of a "legal but very modest" PDPA role in a power-sharing arrangement with Zahir Shah and moderate resistance leaders. The American objective as enunciated by President Reagan was to displace the existing Kabul regime completely, "starting from scratch" to build an entirely new government structure.[22]

The central argument made by Kornienko and Akhromeyev was that the Unites States would not want to see a regime in Kabul controlled by Islamic fundamentalist groups.[23] But Zia and his allies in Pakistan did want to see such a government and were implacably opposed to Zahir Shah. Washington, for its part, wanted to avoid a clash with Islamabad. The United States was focused primarily on getting Soviet forces to leave, confident that the resistance would quickly displace Najibullah after the Soviet pullout and would not have to bother with political compromises.

In contrast to Washington's assumption that Kabul's future would be settled militarily, Moscow, and later Islamabad, with differing objectives in mind, pursued policies of "linkage." The Soviet Union was the first to adopt this policy, signaling at the beginning of 1987 that the withdrawal could not take place until the United States and Pakistan agreed to assure a stable transition that would minimize the danger of a massacre of PDPA leaders.

Secretary of State Shultz writes in his memoirs that in early January the Soviet Union offered to discuss a timetable for troop withdrawal linked to the creation of a "government of national unity that would include the Afghan freedom fighters and even the leaders of armed Afghan groups outside of Afghanistan." But Shultz felt that "we would be premature to engage on the agenda as they stated it. . . . We would not accept a government broadened out of the present regime."[24] Ambassador Arthur Hartman, who conveyed the Soviet overture to Washington, explained that Shultz "didn't pick this up because he thought that Cap Weinberger and others would ridicule him. Shultz's priority at that time was to get arms control going. Don't forget that he was dealing with an Administration that wasn't entirely rational aboout matters involving the Russians."

On another occasion, Shultz adds, during a Moscow meeting on April 14, Gorbachev told him that "the Soviet Union wanted to leave, but the United States kept putting 'sticks in the spokes.' The U.S. would not agree to a modified version of the present government."[25]

Returning from Moscow with Shultz, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Michael Armacost made a major policy speech, formally serving notice that the United States would not accept a coalition government "built around and led by the Communist Party of Afghanistan." Armacost called on the Soviet

Union to let the seven-party resistance alliance based in Pakistan decide "who should lead an interim government and how best it can be created."[26]

The Geneva negotiations were stalled in mid-1987, nominally over the issue of a withdrawal timetable. But Cordovez recognized that the key reason for Soviet foot dragging was the lack of progress on a coalition formula that would stabilize the Kabul regime before the withdrawal started. In July he submitted a memorandum containing a "Scenario" for a coalition to Islamabad, Kabul, Moscow, and Washington. He proposed a U.N.-facilitated Geneva meeting of Afghan leaders to set up "broadly based transitional arrangements" that would embrace the seven parties, the PDPA, and "selected personalities" among prominent Afghan exiles. Although the "Scenario" was not specific, Cordovez made clear that he saw a pivotal role for Zahir Shah in this scenario. Rejecting Najibullah's demand for PDPA control of the presidency and the armed forces, he wrote that "no party would be assured a predominant role in the transitional arrangements."

The Cordovez plan was "never discussed at the highest levels," said Kornienko. "Everything relating to Afghanistan at that time was in the hands of Shevardnadze, and he opposed it." "It would have been difficult for us to support his proposal," Vorontsov added, "because Najibullah didn't like it. But the issue never really came to a head for us because it was clear that you and the Pakistanis didn't like it either." The Cordovez plan would have permitted a greater role for the PDPA than Kornienko and Akhromeyev had envisaged. Still, Najibullah thought the proposal gave him too little power, while Washington and Islamabad thought it gave him too much.

The American and Pakistani attitude toward the terms of a coalition "gave us the impression that you were asking us, in effect, to turn over Afghanistan to you," Vorontsov reflected. Given this posture, "it was really academic to argue about what type of coalition, as we did in Moscow, endlessly. In practical terms, we increasingly recognized that we had to make Najibullah strong enough to survive, at least for a decent interval, and we realized that if we insisted on 'linkage,' we would never withdraw." On November 16 Vorontsov, then First Deputy Foreign Minister, met with Armacost in Geneva. Armacost told a Washington press conference soon after that "they are now talking about a timetable for withdrawal that is not contingent on other arrangements. And that's a fairly important point, if true, because it's always possible to string out discussions of interim government arrangements indefinitely and avoid commencing the withdrawal, but it's the completion of the withdrawal that's important."[27]

The American attitude toward proposals for a coalition in Kabul was governed by the belief that Najibullah would be ousted soon after Soviet forces left. This assumption rested, in turn, on a politically colored assessment of the strength and cohesion of the Pakistan-based resistance groups. With few experienced observers of Afghanistan in the key government agencies involved, Washington viewed the Afghan scene largely through Pakistani lenses. In conversations with American officials during the war years I found that Afghan history began for most of them with the Soviet occupation. They knew little and cared

less about the centuries-old background of Islamabad's antipathy to Zahir Shah and to the Pushtun majority that had ruled in Kabul under the monarchy until the eve of the occupation. In evaluating the strength of the Pakistan-based parties, they discounted the fact that these groups were vehicles of minority ethnic and religious factions and were thus, by their nature, cut off from the established social hierarchy inside the country. Washington uncritically accepted subjective Pakistani intelligence estimates that underrated the strength of the powerful tribally based resistance elements linked to the former King and greatly overrated the political potential of the ISI's Afghan clients.

While Moscow was debating what type of coalition would serve Soviet interests, the United States was moving in the opposite direction. American policy during 1987 was designed to build up the Pakistan-based alliance as a shadow government that could take over after the war and,Washington hoped, displace Kabul in the interim as the accredited representative of Afghanistan in the United Nations. Testifying before a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on May 21, 1987, Charles Dunbar, the State Department's Coordinator of Afghan Affairs, declared that the alliance was "making encouraging progress toward taking on the attributes of a government. Something like this takes a while to develop. We are encouraging it in every way that we can think of, and at the time that happens we will move on the U.N. front. . . . But we need to wait a bit longer." Dunbar attributed the political progress being made by the resistance in large part to the fact that "our humanitarian assistance is being channeled through the Resistance Alliance and its Education, Health, Agriculture, and Transport Committees. As those committees are able to deliver social services inside Afghanistan, they . . . show themselves to be the government in those areas."[28]

Dunbar, who served as U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Kabul during the first years of the Soviet occupation, was one of the more knowledgeable observers of Afghan affairs in the U.S. government. Looking back, he said in a 1992 interview that his primary State Department role was

> to sell the idea to the world that the resistance should be taken seriously as a political movement and to do what I could to help it to get its act together. My first objective was to get recognition of the alliance as a valid national liberation struggle like the PLO. But of course we ran constantly up against the fact that they didn't have the unity of the PLO. Perhaps we should have been more agnostic about whether the alliance would be the future government of Afghanistan.

Asked whether the United States had ever actively encouraged the resistance to form a government in exile that would challenge Kabul for the Afghan seat in the United Nations, Dunbar replied that "there were those who wanted to do this, but Pakistan felt that a government in exile would detract from their control of the war, and for that reason and others we never pushed it."

As for the "Zahir Shah option," Dunbar added that "I would have been amenable, but I knew it wasn't on."[29] However, in numerous conversations during the war, he was more skeptical, reflecting the ambivalent U.S. official attitude. He saw the former King and his advisers as moderates and thus attrac-

tive to the United States. But he occasionally expressed suspicion about whether the King would be "too close to the Russians." Echoing the Pakistani view, Dunbar dismissed evidence of the King's popularity among Afghans, observing on one occasion that "we're really just talking about a bunch of émigrés." In July 1987 I confronted him with the results of a random sample poll conducted by the Afghan Information Center in Peshawar among 2,287 Afghan refugees in 108 refugee camps representing twenty-three of the twenty-eight provinces in Afghanistan. The poll showed 71.6 percent in favor of the King as the leader of postwar Afghanistan. Soon after its publication, assassins believed to be identified with the fundamentalist Hezbe Islami murdered the respected director of the Afghan Information Center, Bahauddin Majrooh, former dean of Kabul University. "Oh, the refugees are a special case," Dunbar told me. "The resistance is the only game in town, and you know how the ISI feels about Zahir Shah."

Zia and "Strategic Realignment"

To put the picture in perspective, it should be noted that Pakistani leaders were not unanimous during 1987 with respect to the type of postwar Afghan government that would best serve Pakistani interests. The ISI was more determined than ever to install a fundamentalist-dominated regime that it assumed would be closely linked to Islamabad. General Akhtar Rahman Khan, the ISI Director, argued that talk of political compromise would dampen the fighting spirit of the resistance groups. Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan, on the other hand, maintained that a stable transition without bloodshed could be achieved only through a coalition that gave a key role to moderate resistance elements and included PDPA participation. Najibullah, in this scenario, would be replaced by a neutral personality. As it happened, although Yaqub was unaware of the internal debate then raging in Moscow, he was pursuing a solution that was almost identical to what Kornienko and Akhromeyev had in mind. According to Riaz Mohammed Khan, then the Foreign Ministry's Director of Afghan Affairs, Yaqub was "convinced that the former King, Zahir Shah, could play a pivotal role in the transitional period as a personality agreeable to Moscow and with visible support among nationalists and refugees."[30]

President Zia agreed with the ISI approach, but he authorized Yaqub to test the Soviet reaction. Yaqub then embarked on what proved to be an abortive three-month diplomatic initiative during early 1987. As he recalled in a 1992 interview, he knew that he would be actively subverted by the ISI and would get no help from Zia. Still, he hoped that a conciliatory Soviet attitude would give him leverage in his internal battles. His first setback came when Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Kovalyev, visiting Islamabad in mid-January, made his expected appeal for acceptance of Najibullah's "national reconciliation" overtures. Yaqub countered with a proposal for a broad-based coalition headed by a neutral personality. But Zia, in a separate meeting with Kovalyev, undercut Yaqub by emphasizing the need for an "Islamic government" in Kabul. Yaqub

made two trips to Moscow during February with a trip in between to Rome for a meeting with Zahir Shah's advisers. The purpose of the Rome trip, writes Riaz Mohammed Khan, "was to convey a message to Moscow." Confronted with ISI opposition, "Yaqub wanted to develop the Zahir Shah option through a Soviet endorsement." But Foreign Minister Shevardnadze made clear in Moscow that he considered it "impractical" to replace the leader of what was an established structure in Kabul.[31]

Zia's new civilian prime minister, Muhammed Khan Junejo, sympathized with Yaqub's efforts but lacked the power to challenge the ISI, which reports directly and exclusively to the President. Another important factor that killed the Yaqub initiative was the replacement of ISI Director Rahman in late March by Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, a militant fundamentalist who was described in a secret CIA assessment at the time as "a real fire-breather in religious matters."[32] Gul was even more adamantly opposed to a political compromise than Rahman. He wanted the resistance groups to hold an elected assembly, or *shura,* of their own that would choose a shadow government. The formal announcement of plans for the *shura* in May marked the end of serious Pakistani interest in the "Zahir Shah option" or any other form of coalition compromise with the PDPA.

Several Soviet military setbacks during mid-1987 reinforced the ISI's belief that the resistance could win on the battlefield and did not have to make political compromises. The advent of the Stingers improved the morale of the resistance groups and led to exultant claims of Soviet aircraft and helicopter losses.[33] In an offensive at Argandhab, near Kandahar, Soviet generals decided not to use helicopters, resorting instead to cluster bombs and high-altitude bombing. This change of tactics demoralized Afghan troops, who had been accustomed to helicopter protection. The Argandhab campaign ended in failure, with significant defections to the resistance. Another psychological boost for the resistance came in a protracted battle at Jaji. Soviet and Afghan forces suffered heavy losses from antiaircraft fire and were largely thwarted in their effort to destroy resistance supply dumps and to place observation posts at key points. This time Soviet, not Afghan, forces bore the brunt of the attack, and helicopters operated at low altitudes to evade the Stingers. After twenty-four days, the Soviet offensive was abandoned.

The Jaji defeat led Moscow to make a more determined effort to assert its military dominance in December 1987, when it sent twenty thousand troops to relieve the beleaguered Afghan garrison at Khost. Pointing to this successful operation, Moscow could accurately argue later that Soviet forces were not in retreat when the Geneva accords were concluded. Militarily, the war was a stalemate that had become increasingly costly to sustain. But as David C. Isby observed at the time, the Soviet Army could "still go wherever it wants to go in Afghanistan."[34]

The six months leading up to the Geneva accords were marked by an intensifying domestic power struggle in Pakistan that was directly linked with differences over Afghan policy. Yielding to pressures for the democratization of his military-dominated regime, Zia had agreed to hold parliamentary elections in

March 1987. The new civilian prime minister, Junejo, maintained a low profile at first but gradually began to assert himself, even on important military budget and personnel matters, increasingly ruffling Zia's feathers. In November 1987, without consulting Zia, Junejo ousted Yaqub as Foreign Minister, taking over the portfolio himself. He then ordered Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar to discontinue Yaqub's practice of sending all important foreign policy decisions for final approval to Zia. "It was constitutionally correct for me to send the files only to the Foreign Minister, or to the Prime Minister," Sattar told me in a 1989 interview. "It was for the Prime Minister to decide what decisions to refer to the President. But Zia was not used to this, and it upset him greatly, especially at a time when we were all beginning to take the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal more seriously."[35]

Zia had gone along with the United States during 1987 in opposing the Soviet policy of linking the withdrawal to U.S. and Pakistani acceptance of a coalition government. In early 1988, however, Zia reversed himself, announcing his own version of "linkage." In a series of interviews in January, he declared that Pakistan would not sign the Geneva accords unless Moscow removed Najibullah and agreed to an interim government to be chosen through processes dominated by the Pakistan-based resistance groups.[36]

The Kabul regime could have indirect minority representation through neutral, non-Communist Afghans acceptable to the PDPA, provided these representatives were "good Muslims." According to Jack Matlock, then the American Ambassador in Moscow, Zia envisaged a thirty-member governing council in which twelve of the members would be "good Muslims" who would be chosen by the ISI from a longer list to be submitted by Kabul.

"Obviously the Pakistanis were going to decide who were the good Muslims," Matlock recalled. "The Russians quickly drew the conclusion that Zia was not going to offer anything that would be acceptable to Najibullah."[37] When Secretary of State Shultz raised the interim government issue in Zia's behalf on a February visit to Moscow, Gorbachev impatiently dismissed the idea, Shultz told me, saying that "'we can't dance the polka with all of these Afghan parties." Gorbachev pointed out that in January 1987 Moscow had offered to set a withdrawal timetable in exchange for U.S. cooperation in creating an interim government. At that time Shultz had flatly rejected the idea of "a government broadened out of the present regime." Matlock, who was present, recalled that Gorbachev remarked sarcastically, "Here you are now, asking us to do things that we abandoned earlier on your advice." "Frankly," said Shultz, "I wasn't too unhappy that he turned the Zia proposal down because I was afraid it would hold up the withdrawal. It couldn't have realistically been done. How could you have made a working government out of all these disparate parts?"[38]

What accounted for Zia's reversal on the "linkage" issue?

"Basically, he felt the United States was not playing good poker," explained Arnold Raphel, who saw Zia regularly during this period as U.S. Ambassador. (Raphel and Zia were among those killed in a still-unexplained plane crash in July 1988.) "He thought we were too eager to get the withdrawal started and could get rid of Najibullah if we held out long enough. He felt sure the Russians

would withdraw, eventually, that they would blink." Pointing to "genuine differences between us over priorities," Raphel added that "we were focused on the withdrawal, while Zia and the ISI were more concerned about what they called 'strategic realignment' and about establishing a pan-Islamic confederation of Pakistan and Afghanistan. They felt that after eight years Pakistan was entitled to run its own show in Kabul. They didn't want an Afghanistan that had fifteen hundred Indian advisers as it did in the days of the King."[39]

While acknowledging that Zia had geopolitical objectives in Afghanistan, former Foreign Secretary Sattar expressed his own belief that Zia's power struggle with Junejo was the governing factor behind the President's eleventh-hour attempt to delay the signing of the accords. "He had made up his mind to dismiss Junejo as soon as he could," Sattar observed. "He thought it would be more easily accepted in the West if the Afghan conflict was still in progress, rather than after the Geneva agreement was signed and the Soviets were on their way out."

What Zia did not anticipate was the political skill with which Junejo would use the Afghan issue as a weapon to fortify his own position. Zia finally did oust the civilian government in May, but he lost his struggle to block Pakistani support of the Geneva accords after Junejo mobilized public opinion in a bold challenge to the President. A plodding, soft-spoken machine politician, Junejo had studiously avoided controversy during his rise to power. His determined stand surprised friends and foes alike. On February 17 Junejo invited eleven leading editors to a briefing in which he explained why he felt that Pakistan should sign the accords. Among other things, he explained, "our American and Saudi friends would not forgive us, and they are reminding me of this day after day." Outraged, Zia held his own briefing on the following day, charging that "America and the Soviet Union have made a secret agreement on the Afghan issue, and they are attempting to smear Pakistan in the bargain as an obstacle to peace." The United States, Zia said, "is only interested in the withdrawal of Soviet troops. It doesn't care what happens to the Afghans afterward."[40]

Over Zia's protests Junejo then convened a Round Table Conference on March 5 and 6, assembling the leaders of all of Pakistan's nineteen political parties. Only the Jamaat Islami and two other fundamentalist groups dissented from the majority view that Pakistan should sign the accords. Following the sessions Junejo invited his cabinet to a dinner at his house, where all of the ministers except one voiced support for the accords. Junejo's deputy in the Foreign Ministry, Minister of State Zain Noorani, recalled that Zia arrived late and then spoke passionately for forty minutes against signing. "Zia went scarlet," Noorani said, when one of his most loyal lieutenants, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, then Finance Minister and later to succeed Zia as president, "demolished every point that Zia had made without any apology." Stalking out of the meeting, Zia warned that "our people will lynch you if you sign."

Ultimately, faced with domestic and foreign pressures, Zia dropped his opposition to the accords. Washington and Moscow gave him face-saving statements pledging to step up their efforts to establish an interim government during the withdrawal process. But a month later, he dismissed Junejo, precipi-

tating a political crisis that was still unresolved when Zia was killed in the mysterious crash of his plane on July 8.

In a conversation with me on June 29, Zia reaffirmed his belief that the accords were a setback for Pakistan. "Eventually, Gorbachev would have blinked," he said, if the United States had insisted on the removal of the Kabul regime as a condition for the conclusion of the accords, as he and some Americans, including former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, were advocating. Even if this had meant the breakdown of the settlement process in April, Zia declared, the Soviet Union "would have come back sooner or later. Gorbachev pulled a fast one by leaving Najib behind. He threw the bait by agreeing to withdraw without a change of regime, and it was swallowed."

Zia said that he would give Cordovez six months within which to establish an interim government. Waving his hand, he added that "he won't succeed because it's not possible for all of these groups to merge in a pot palatable to the people. The *mujahideen* have sacrificed. We will either throw Najib out of Kabul or establish a provisional government inside Afghanistan first and then throw him out." Zia spoke of a Pakistan-Afghanistan confederation in which Pakistanis and Afghans could travel freely back and forth without passports. He did not foresee that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was only three years away when he envisaged a pan-Islamic bloc that "would one day win over the Muslims in the Soviet Union . . . who knows . . . perhaps even Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, you will see."[41]

The United States Moves the Goalposts

In Washington, as in Islamabad, opponents of the Geneva accords demanded that the withdrawal be conditioned on the replacement of the Najibullah regime. But American critics of the accords were equally concerned about another issue: the fact that the "noninterference" provisions would require the United States to terminate its shipments of weapons to the resistance without a parallel Soviet aid cutoff to Kabul.

From the outset the accords were shaped within parameters clearly defined by the legal status of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as a U.N. member-state with a seat in the General Assembly. In the U.N. context, the Kabul government was a legitimate regime, while the resistance, as an insurgent movement, was automatically excluded from the negotiations. Moreover, for Cordovez, this juridical fact of life was inseparably linked with *realpolitik*. Moscow made clear that it would not join in an agreement requiring it to abandon the regime that it had intervened to defend or to cut off military assistance to Kabul. In Soviet eyes the withdrawal itself would be a momentous concession that would inevitably be perceived as a retreat. Thus, the essential tradeoff in the accords—a complete pullout within an agreed period in exchange for a cessation of aid to the resistance—was perceived as an equitable bargain. Cordovez recognized from the beginning of his mission that *realpolitik* made it necessary for him to ignore the issue of Soviet military aid to a client regime in a neighboring state.

The United States did not challenge the asymmetrical character of the weapons cutoff when it agreed to be a guarantor of the accords in December 1985. Indeed, Deputy Secretary of State Whitehead implicitly accepted it by conditioning U.S. willingness to be a guarantor solely on a satisfactory withdrawal timetable. Secretary of State Shultz explicitly defended the cutoff in an exchange with Republican Senator Gordon Humphrey before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 3, 1987. Asked whether "outside assistance to the *mujahideen* will be cut off at Day One" under the accords, Shultz replied that

> if you had a Soviet withdrawal schedule that was front-loaded and was fast . . . then you would have in place the freedom fighters who have a level of armaments and would be able to give an account of themselves without being continuously further supplied. So I think you would be safe in saying that you probably would turn your resources in a different direction. . . . I would assume that if the day should emerge when Soviet troops are out of Afghanistan . . . we would want to shift resources, not stop the flow of resources, but have them go to a different kind of purpose.[42]

Humphrey and other critics of the accords argued that President Reagan had never been consulted about the aid cutoff provision and would not accept it. The most vocal of these critics inside the Administration was Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. In an interview on January 21, 1994, Weinberger, who resigned on November 5, 1987, recalled that he was "shocked and horrified" to discover in mid-1987 that the projected Geneva accords would bar U.S. aid and would leave Najibullah in place. "I tried to alert the President to the situation," he said.

> I felt we shouldn't sign the agreement the way it was. The people working on it tried to give it a spin that it would be a great victory to get the Soviets out, but I argued that it was just a trick to disarm us while they kept their influence, with Najibullah still in a position to do their bidding and hordes of Soviet advisers there.
>
> I felt we should hold out for a change of government in Kabul because otherwise Najibullah could always ask them to return. I remember heated discussions in the White House. The President was there at least once and seemed impressed with my arguments. I would like to think that some of the objections I raised led to changes in our position after I left. I don't know what my attitude to the final agreement would have been if I had been privy to the inside facts, but I didn't like the whole thing. I didn't really believe they would get out until I saw their forces on the bridge crossing the Oxus.

Shortly before the Washington summit in December 1987, the President was asked in a presummit interview with television network news anchors whether he would agree to a proposal for a one-year U.S. arms aid moratorium in exchange for a Soviet withdrawal. "I don't think we could do anything of that kind," Reagan replied, "because the puppet government that has been left there has a military, and it would be the same as what I'm arguing about with regard to the freedom fighters in Nicaragua. You can't suddenly disarm them and leave them prey to the other government."[43] "This was not a preplanned answer,"

observed Whitehead. "He was surprised and he sort of thought about it for the first time. He hadn't been coached. But that eventually did become policy."

Alarmed by this statement, Gorbachev asked the President at a White House luncheon during the summit to confirm that American aid would stop once the withdrawal started. "He threw it out to the President very pointedly," recalled Ambassador Matlock, who was present. "But the President didn't give a direct reply. He said something generally positive but noncommittal and then began talking about something else. I wasn't sure whether Gorbachev meant that Soviet arms shipments would also stop. And I regretted that Reagan didn't press him on this point. But the question was left unanswered at that time." Similarly, in working-level negotiations during the summit, one of Gorbachev's advisers, Yevgeny Primakov, said that he had "repeated several times in the presence of Shultz our understanding that U.S. aid would be stopped, but he said nothing. Naturally, we were very concerned."

Reaffirming Soviet readiness to withdraw at his predeparture press conference, Gorbachev emphasized that "this must at the same time become the beginning of an end to arms and financial supplies to the insurgent forces." On the following day, asked for clarification by reporters, Undersecretary of State Armacost declared that "we will stand by the obligations that are embedded in the Geneva understandings, once there is agreement on the timetable for withdrawal."[44] This statement touched off a chaotic week-long sparring match between White House and State Department spokesmen. On December 13 Reagan's Chief of Staff, Howard Baker, declared that "the President was very clear in saying to Gorbachev more than once, 'After you've pulled out, and it's clear the resistance forces are integrated in the political processes of forming a government, then we'll consider a cutoff of U.S. military aid."[45] White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said in a similar vein a day later that "the first thing that must occur is the pullout of Soviet troops and then we'll talk about cutting off U.S. aid. It would not be simultaneous."[46] But on the same day, a State Department spokesman was saying that the United States would abide by the Geneva accords, under which the Soviet pullout and the U.S. aid cutoff would begin simultaneously sixty days after the signing.[47] On December 16 Fitzwater reversed himself, conceding that "once they begin to withdraw the troops, then under the Geneva accords, there would be a withdrawal of support to the rebels."[48]

Up to this point, the fact that the Geneva accords did not bar Soviet aid to Kabul had attracted little attention. According to Secretary of State Shultz, he had taken it for granted that Moscow would not resupply Kabul until Shevardnadze made a statement on January 6, 1988, that the Soviet Union reserved the right to do so. Shultz countered on the next day with a press conference rejoinder implicitly conditioning a U.S. aid cutoff on a parallel Soviet cutoff. He reaffirmed that the need for U.S. support "in the form of military equipment . . . would cease as the withdrawal proceeds." But he added in response to a question about Soviet aid that "we would presume that as part of the Geneva agreement, military supplies would stop going in there."[49]

"To be quite honest, we hadn't really focused on exactly how the agreement

would work until then," Shultz told me. "I didn't have all of the spinout of this in my mind, as I did once the Soviets made their intention to withdraw clear to us. I implicitly expected that they wouldn't keep up their supply if we stopped. What Shevardnadze said, and what the President had said before the summit, sharpened up the issue, and I had to hit the ball back."[50]

Despite this forewarning of a major shift in the U.S. posture, Gorbachev made his February 8 announcement pledging to start the withdrawal by May 15 if the accords were signed by March 15 and to complete it within ten months. The Soviet and Afghan governments had agreed on this timetable, he said, and "a comparatively large part" of the Soviet forces would leave in "the first stage."[51] Cordovez had been pressing for a firm offer of a "front-loaded," single-digit timetable, and Kornienko had returned from a mid-January Washington visit convinced that a definite starting date was necessary to overcome U.S. skepticism concerning Soviet readiness to withdraw.

On this issue Gorbachev had overruled Shevardnadze, who favored a more qualified statement that left him room for maneuver. Shevardnadze warned that a formal commitment to a specific target date would give the impression of an urgent need to withdraw. Washington and Islamabad would be tempted to harden their terms. But Kornienko felt that a firm starting date was necessary to prevent Soviet opponents of the pullout from stalling it indefinitely. He takes credit for formulating the language that Gorbachev used when he revised his speech draft at the eleventh hour.[52]

Hailing the Gorbachev announcement, the *New York Times* warned that "incredibly, some Administration hard-liners risk unwinding the deal" by reopening its aid cutoff provisions. The concerns expressed over this issue, said the *Times,* "appear to us misplaced and excessive."[53] But much more powerful pressure was coming from the right. As Shevardnadze had feared, Shultz confronted him with a demand for a symmetrical approach to the aid issue during a Moscow meeting on February 21.

"He was very upset," Shultz recalled in an interview. "He kept accusing us of changing our position at the last minute, of upping the ante, of reneging on earlier understandings. And of course he had a point. It's true that in 1985 we had accepted the idea that when the Soviets left, our support for the *mujahideen* would have served its purpose and could stop. He said several times, 'You agreed to this when you weren't paying much attention and you didn't think the agreement was going anywhere, and now you're backing out.' I told him that we just hadn't realized that they intended to continue supplying weapons to Kabul."

When I suggested that the real reason for the change in his position was conservative political pressure, he shrugged, saying that

> reciprocity was implicit in the situation, it was the only way we could proceed. In the year or so before the accords really shaped up, I felt that while the Soviets could be expected to leave their allies militarily equipped, we would do the same with our allies. I hadn't really thought much about resupply. As the possibility of the accords became more operationally significant, the symmetry issue became more prominent. I never had the slightest doubt in my mind that symmetry was the right approach.

Shortly after his return, Senator Humphrey pushed through a unanimous Senate resolution urging the President to "stand firm on the necessity for the Soviets to terminate all forms of military assistance and logistical support to the Kabul regime . . . and to ensure that the United States does not cease, suspend, diminish or otherwise restrict assistance to the Afghan resistance until it is absolutely clear that the Soviets have terminated their military occupation."[54] On March 4, responding to a barrage of media criticism,[55] the State Department made its first formal statement that the United States would insist on a "symmetrical cessation" of military aid.[56] This evoked an angry reaction in Moscow. On March 11 a delegation of scholars and senators met with Gorbachev. The Afghan military aid issue was "the one issue that brought Gorbachev out of his chair," reported Soviet specialist Robert Legvold. "There was a real sense among the Soviets of American backsliding on earlier understandings related to Afghanistan. The withdrawal has been a difficult decision, and they are embarrassed and incensed that the United States is now demanding further concessions."[57]

The aid cutoff issue dominated a series of acrimonious meetings when Shevardnadze came to Washington in late March. "From the U.S. standpoint," wrote Don Oberdorfer in the *Washington Post,* "the Soviets are in a weak bargaining position on Afghanistan, having created irreversible expectations by announcing their pullout."[58] Nevertheless, in a bid for compromise, Shultz proposed a mutual military aid moratorium "that should run initially from the time when the withdrawal starts until perhaps three months thereafter, and can then be potentially extended."[59] Shevardnadze flatly rejected this proposal in a three-hour meeting on March 24. Shultz vividly describes this confrontation in his memoirs:

> He finally asked for a 'yes' or 'no' to his request for an end to U.S. supplies of arms to the *muhahideen.* I suggested we pause for a few moments. I took Mike Armacost [Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs] and Colin Powell [National Security Adviser] to my back office. We talked the matter over and over. We knew Shevardnadze was in charge of the Politburo effort on Afghanistan. He was on the spot. But we could not see any reason to change our position. We went back into my larger office to rejoin Shevardnadze. I restated our position. He paled, threw up his hands. The meeting had been one of our most difficult.[60]

Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, who accompanied Shevardnadze to Andrews Air Force base, told reporters that he looked dejected and "seemed like a very lonely man" going up the ramp to his Aeroflot plane.[61]

The complex diplomatic skirmishing that led to the resolution of this impasse is described in the next chapter. Cordovez prepared a compromise proposal on March 28 that was rejected by the Soviet Union but ultimately led to the tacit adoption of what came to be called "positive symmetry," as distinct from the "negative symmetry" label given to Shultz's moratorium proposal. Moscow refused to join in a public declaration acknowledging the U.S. right to continue aid but was clearly aware that Washington did not rule out the continuance of aid through Pakistan.

For the Junejo government in Pakistan, the breakdown of the U.S.-Soviet negotiations was alarming. The Pakistani public had looked hopefully to the Geneva negotiations for six years and saw a withdrawal as essential for national security. Even Zia, pleased that the United States was insisting on a Soviet aid cutoff, had softened his opposition to the accords. The United States, for its part, wanted the withdrawal to proceed but saw the accords as a legal quagmire. How could the United States continue to supply aid in the face of the explicit ban in the agreement on a continued Pakistani military aid role? The United States itself, as a guarantor, would not be violating the letter of the agreement. The Guarantee Declaration made no specific mention of military supplies. As a direct signatory of the accords, however, Pakistan would undertake "to prevent within its territory the training, equipping, financing, and recruiting of mercenaries from whatever origin for the purpose of hostile activities against the other High Contracting Party [Afghanistan]."

Shultz told me with a wry smile how this dilemma was resolved. After preliminary diplomatic exchanges, two phone calls were arranged. On March 30 Junejo called him to urge that U.S. assistance be continued and to pledge that Pakistan would still be willing to serve as a conduit for aid. Several hours later Zia called Reagan with the same message. Shultz, who was present, said that he heard the President ask Zia how he would deal with Soviet accusations that Pakistan was violating the accords. As recounted by the President to Shultz, Zia replied that "we will deny that there is any aid going through our territory. After all, that's what we have been doing for eight years." In Islam, Zia added, "it is permissible to lie in a just cause."

Despite the American refusal to cut off weapons aid, Gorbachev quickly concluded that it was desirable to withdraw within the framework of an international agreement, however flawed, rather than to proceed independently. "We weren't thinking only of Afghanistan," recalled Vadim Zagladin. "There were many processes taking place at that time. The INF agreement on missiles in Europe was particularly important, and all of these things were interconnected." For Moscow, it was a humiliating embarrassment to have to give in to the United States on the aid cutoff issue. For Kabul, however, much more was at stake, and the U.S. stand provoked an Afghan threat not to sign the agreement.

Najibullah's opposition to the accords was reinforced by an impasse in the Geneva negotiations relating to another issue: the disputed Afghanistan-Pakistan boundary known as the Durand Line. The accords contained a pledge by the signatories to respect "existing internationally recognized boundaries." Afghanistan had consistently objected to this language as implicitly favoring the Pakistani position that the Durand Line was not in dispute. All Pushtuns regarded the British-imposed boundary, which divided Pushtun-majority territory, as an unjust legacy of colonialism. As Cordovez elaborates in Chapter 11, this volatile issue was not resolved until the very eve of the accords. Even then, however, before agreeing to sign, Najibullah extracted last-minute sweeteners from Khrychkov in the form of new military aid promises. Finally, on April 7, Najibullah met Gorbachev in Tashkent, where the two announced that the last barriers to the conclusion of the Geneva agreement had been removed.

The United States wanted something in the record to establish that the Soviet Union had acquiesced in the U.S. decision to continue supplying military aid. This was accomplished, American spokesmen said at the time, through an exchange of letters on April 8 and 9. But the letters remain secret. Shultz states cryptically in his memoirs that his message to Shevardnadze pushed him "to acknowledge that the United States would be free to continue to supply our side in Afghanistan, through Pakistan. An answer came back the next day saying that all was agreed but failing to be specific on this point. I cabled Shevardnadze right back, saying that we would accept no restrictions on our right to supply."[62] Senator Humphrey, stating that the letters were shown to congressional committees, alleged later that the Soviet reply had "rejected the State Department's claim to a unilateral right to continue aid."[63]

After forewarning Moscow, Shultz made a formal statement at the April 14 signing ceremony that "it is our right to provide military aid to the resistance. We are ready to exercise that right. But we are prepared to meet restraint with restraint."[64]

How will history judge the decision by Washington and Islamabad to uphold "positive symmetry"?

Four years after the signing of the accords, former Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan, who represented Pakistan during most of the Geneva negotiations, pointed sadly to the civil war that was still raging in Afghanistan:

> Look at what this so-called "symmetry" has accomplished! I didn't like the "noninterference" clauses, but they were politically necessary to make the withdrawal acceptable in the Soviet context. Also, it offered the only realistic way available to minimize the inevitable carnage that would follow the withdrawal. We knew that both sides would leave behind weapons. But the agreement envisaged a process in which the conflict would gradually wind down. Instead, we have stoked the fires.
>
> To say that the Geneva Accords were flawed because they were "asymmetrical" is incorrect. To talk of "symmetry" in the Afghan context had no meaning because there was a built-in asymmetry, legally, between Kabul and the resistance and between the Soviet role and our role. The Kabul government, whatever we thought of it, was a member state of the United Nations. The resistance was an insurgent movement. The Soviet Union sought to justify its intervention by saying that we had intervened first against a U.N. member. But I was very careful never to accept the idea that our indirect intervention was on the same plane as their state-to-state aggression. Once we did that we confused the issue of their historical responsibility for this tragedy.[65]

To Sign or Not to Sign

Ironically, the U.S. decision to sign the Geneva Accords was facilitated by the uncritical assumption in the intelligence community that the Najibullah regime would collapse during or soon after the Soviet withdrawal. Since his regime would not last long, anyway, Shultz could argue, the fact that the agreement left Najibullah in place should not deter the United States from its central objective of getting Soviet forces out.

Shultz himself did not share the CIA's certainty that the regime would soon collapse. He was "disappointed, but not too surprised," he told me, when "they proved to be way off base." The State Department's Chargé d'Affaires in Kabul, Jon Glassman, had sharply disagreed with the agency's prediction, and "I wondered whether there might not be a long fight that could drag on and on." Nevertheless, on April 11, when he asked the President for a green light to sign the accords, Shultz made no mention of his doubts. Instead, to bolster his case that the United States should sign the agreement, he cited a conversation with CIA Director Robert Gates the day before and a lengthy CIA memorandum detailing Najibullah's gloomy prospects.

I asked Shultz whether the President would have stopped Shultz from signing the accords if he had been told that Najibullah would last for four more years. "Don't forget," he replied, "that we had decided on symmetry. I think Reagan was ready to go ahead, whatever, given symmetrical treatment." "I don't agree with that at all," said Caspar Weinberger. "I feel certain that the President would not have gone along with it if he had known that Najibullah would last as long as he did."

Some conservative critics were opposed to the accords precisely because they feared that Najibullah would not fall. Contending that the United States should hold out for an agreement conditioned on replacement of the Kabul regime, former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick attacked an article of mine supporting the accords, in which I had suggested that Najibullah would survive in office longer than expected. My cardinal sin, in her eyes, was that I had advocated a coalition government including Communist representation.[66] As I pointed out in a rebuttal, her ideologically driven concept of a successor government ignored ethnic and religious factors and amounted, in effect, to support for an Islamic fundamentalist regime in Kabul.[67]

I had a close-up glimpse of the CIA's thinking on March 4, 1988, when I was invited to lunch by the agency's Director of Afghanistan Affairs, Michael Scheuer, who was preparing an assessment of the Afghan political scene for Gates. For two hours, in an alcove at Vincenzo's restaurant, I argued with Scheuer and three of his analysts.[68] Predicting an uncontrollable process of demoralization and unraveling in Kabul, they told me of reports they had received foreshadowing wholesale defections from Najibullah's armed forces and bureaucracy. I repeatedly asked why Afghans with good jobs would defect if Moscow continued to subsidize and arm the regime. The resistance was hopelessly disunited, I argued, and was trained for guerrilla warfare, not for conventional combat against the well-trained Kabul forces with their airpower. More important, I said, American interests would not be served by support for a military solution that would lead either to chaos or to increased influence for Islamic fundamentalist forces. Why not promote a broad-based transitional government under U.N. auspices? "The *mujahideen* would never accept it," said Scheuer, "and there's no reason why they should. They smell victory."

The controversy over whether to sign the Geneva accords without the ouster of Najibullah reflected widespread confusion over U.S. war aims. To many in the Administration and in Congress, the Afghan conflict had offered an oppor-

tunity for the United States to avenge its humiliation in Vietnam at the hands of a Soviet-supported enemy. The war would not be "won" until the Soviet-installed Afghan regime had been uprooted and its U.S.-backed opponents had triumphed. In this perspective, the United States and the resistance had defeated the Soviet Union militarily, and the continued presence of Najibullah made a mockery of this victory. By contrast, the Administration formally defined its objective in more limited terms as the withdrawal of Soviet forces, while making rhetorical bows to the goal of Afghan self-determination. In a conversation with me on February 10, 1988, Armacost expressed the prevailing State Department belief that Gorbachev wanted to disengage as part of a broader shift in Soviet economic, political, and foreign policy priorities. American policies had made the costs of the war intolerable for Moscow, but militarily the war was a stalemate.

Significantly, two weeks later Ronald Reagan offered a similar assessment in which he carefully avoided saying that the resistance had defeated Soviet forces. He expected Soviet troops to leave, he said, largely because of "the economic situation in the Soviet Union and the fact that, after going on nine years, it's still a stalemate." Asked how much U.S. support for the resistance had to do with the Soviet decision, he replied, "I think it would only have to do with the decision on the basis that, as long as the *mujahideen* were being supplied with weapons and ammunition, they just couldn't be defeated."[69]

Opposition to signing the accords continued until Shultz got on the airplane for Geneva. The "immense significance" of the decision to sign, he wrote, was indicated by "the heat I was taking from some on the hard right who, I suspected, did not really want the Soviets to leave Afghanistan; they preferred to 'bleed' them to death through indefinite continuation of the war." Meeting with worried members of Congress, Shultz pointed out that "without a Geneva agreement, the Soviet withdrawal could be protracted and incomplete. This would prolong the agony of the Afghan people and probably expose Pakistan to continued cross-border reprisals."[70]

A revealing example of last-ditch opposition to the accords came during a congressional hearing in which I testified, together with Soviet specialist Dimitri Simes and Rosanne Klass of Freedom House, a bitter opponent of the accords. Representative Stephen Solarz, who presided at the hearing, asked us "which is preferable from an American point of view, an Afghanistan in which the Soviet Union has withdrawn its forces under the terms of the Geneva accords but in which a Communist government continues to rule in Kabul or an Afghanistan in which a Communist government continues to rule supported by the presence of over one hundred thousand Soviet troops, in the context of continuing American assistance to the *mujahideen.*" Simes and I indicated our preference for the first option, but Klass replied that she would prefer not to have the withdrawal if it meant stopping U.S. aid. "I am not convinced that there would be a great difference," she said, "because I am not convinced that the withdrawal would make a significant difference in the degree of Soviet control presently exerted. I would therefore prefer the choice which allows the resistance to continue to receive aid."[71]

Like Zia, the "hard-right" opponents of the accords believed that continued military pressure would produce a more favorable outcome. Either Moscow would agree to remove Najibullah under a revised Geneva agreement or it would be forced to withdraw unilaterally, leaving him exposed to an unfettered resistance onslaught. As Shultz observed, the flaw in this reasoning was that a unilateral withdrawal would have left Moscow free to make a partial withdrawal, keeping a significant residual force in Afghanistan to guard Kabul and other key centers. It would have been an incomplete, uncertain, reversible process, subject to political pressures from Najibullah and his allies in the Kremlin.

Shevardnadze and Khrychkov, for example, clearly had their doubts about the Geneva agreement. In early April, shortly before the signing of the accords, they proposed a revision of the mutual aid provisions of the 1978 Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty that would have permitted the return of Soviet troops to Afghanistan in certain circumstances. "Luckily enough," wrote Kornienko, "Gorbachev had enough guts to nip this adventurous proposal in the bud."[72]

Shevardnadze subsequently supported three attempts by Najibullah to circumvent the accords, and on all three occasions Gorbachev rebuffed him. In October 1988, writes Anatoliy Chernyayev, Kabul requested Soviet air strikes against Massoud's forces. Yakovlev called Chernyayev in a state of great agitation to report that Shevardnadze, just back from Kabul, was pushing an Afghan request for a Soviet brigade to help break a blockade at Kandahar. "I don't know what to do," said Yakovlev, according to Chernyayev's diary. "I don't want to brawl again with E. A. [Shevardnadze] and M. S. [Gorbachev]. I've already been boxed in the ears more than once. But my conscience torments me." "Has E. A. gone out of his mind," replied Chernyayev, "or doesn't he understand that Najib has arranged a trap so we can't leave?" Chernyayev then phoned Gorbachev, who set up a conference call with Yakovlev and Shevardnadze,

> and a four-person skirmish began, we were attacking one another constantly. Gorbachev listened and threw out answers, always more helpful to Yakovlev and myself. Childish babble flowed from E. A.'s mouth, mixed with military babble. I roughly interrupt:
>
> "But why aggravate the crime? What is the logic? We still will not save Najibullah. This plan goes against all our policies, yes, and even good sense, not to mention the casualties to which you are condemning our boys."
>
> "But you were not there, Anatoliy Sergeevich, and I was, and you do not know what we have done there in the past ten years. Najib told me that if he holds out another year, he can hold on permanently."
>
> "And you believe this? And for this you are ready to throw the assault brigade into battle? To break the agreement in Geneva which you signed?"

Gorbachev broke off the exchange, consulted the military high command, and finally decided against invervention. Within three months, however, during the siege of Jalalabad, Shevardnadze "again very strongly and passionately supported Najibullah's request for airstrikes, dragging behind himself Khrychkov and the generals." This time Gorbachev was adamant from the start, telling an emergency mini-Politburo meeting that "I am categorically against these airstrikes, and as long as I am General Secretary I will not allow us to trample on

words we presented before the whole world. What is going on? Didn't we know where we were heading when we decided to withdraw? Was it a condition of our signature in Geneva that Najibullah would hold on?"[73]

By agreeing to disengage completely despite the declared intention of the United States to continue its aid, Gorbachev embarked on a much more perilous course than he had envisaged when he announced his decision to withdraw on February 8. "Positive symmetry" greatly increased the risk that the Communist regime in Kabul would not survive. Gorbachev decided to take this risk primarily because his new domestic and foreign policy priorities made it desirable to do so. But his decision was greatly facilitated by the basic architecture of the Geneva agreement. To his own "hard right," he could argue that the Kabul regime would remain in place during the withdrawal and would have a chance to stand or fall thereafter on its own.

From the start the Geneva negotiations had proceeded on the premise that the Soviet Union could not be expected to liquidate the government it had intervened to defend. In the final analysis, it was this solid grounding of the accords in *realpolitik* that made it possible for the withdrawal to take place.

11

THE FINAL HURDLES: "LINKAGE" AND THE TIME FRAME

Diego Cordovez

- *At the beginning of 1987 I issue the Omega text of the settlement*
- *Shevardnadze goes to Kabul and Armacost to Islamabad*
- *In Kuwait Yaqub mentions "breaking china"*
- *At the House of Lords with Lady Young, in Los Angeles with Armand Hammer, and in Moscow a long chat with Shevardnadze*
- *At Geneva Nine (February 1987) a breakthrough on the time frame*
- *Vorontsov becomes the chief Afghan negotiator*
- *A talk with Henry Kissinger in his Park Avenue office*
- *A promising meeting with Junejo and Yaqub in Brussels*
- *Shultz goes to Moscow*
- *Yaqub and I quarrel in Washington*
- *Gorbachev commends my efforts but promises nothing*
- *The landing of a small plane in Red Square proves crucial*
- *A secret meeting with former king Zahir Shah*
- *Geneva Ten (September 1987) is a disaster*
- *An invitation to Moscow: Are we about to conclude the Afghan settlement?*

I

To dramatize the fact that there remained only one unresolved issue—the time frame for the withdrawal of Soviet troops—I prepared, at the beginning of 1987, a complete text of the draft settlement with a large omega sign (Ω: "the twenty-fourth and last letter of the Greek alphabet; the ending or last of a series") printed on each page.

That year started with a flurry of diplomatic activity. On January 1 Najibullah declared a cease-fire by Afghan and Soviet troops. Only a few days later Shevardnadze arrived in Kabul on a "working visit." Yaqub Khan traveled to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and China. Armacost and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Kovalyev held consultations with President Zia in Islamabad. The talks begun by Kovalyev and Zia were continued in Moscow between Yaqub and Shevardnadze. Abdul Wakil, the newly appointed Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, visited New Delhi, and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, the Afghan Prime Minister, went to Moscow. To facilitate ongoing consultations, a round of negotiations that had been scheduled to be held in Geneva on February 11 was postponed, at the request of Pakistan, until February 25.

Najibullah's New Year announcement of a cease-fire, which was contingent upon a similar decision by the resistance, followed discussions that he had held in Moscow in December 1986 and was described as a step towards national reconciliation. The cease-fire would be followed, Najibullah said, by a discussion with the opposition: "We don't want to exclude different political groups, moderates, monarchists, and heads of armed anti-Government bands active abroad."[1]

The resistance leaders in Peshawar immediately rejected Najibullah's call for a cease-fire. Resistance spokesman Mohammed Nabi Mohammedi told Agence France-Presse that the *mujahideen* would not be "misled by this trap," saying, "We will continue to fight until Najibullah is thrown out and a complete Islamic government is established in Moslem Afghanistan."[2] The *Washington Post,* in an editorial dated January 4, said that Najibullah's offer had caught the resistance leaders "characteristically unprepared for anything more than a lowest-common-denominator response."

The Pakistani Government made no public pronouncement and seemed to be taking a studiously cautious attitude. But the U.S. State Department readily dismissed Najibullah's declaration. "We are looking for actions rather than announcements," an official spokesman told United Press International.

On 5 January *Dawn* of Karachi published an article titled "A hasty reaction" in which Yaqub was quoted as having said that there had been a "positive" change in the Soviet Union's attitude on Afghanistan. "In view of this," the article noted, "the least that could have been expected of the *mujahideen* and the U.S. was to consult Pakistan. . . . After all, Pakistan is not an unconcerned party in this complicated affair. Our involvement in the Afghan conflict has cost us very dearly in both political and economic terms. The involvement has reached a point where our political and security interests might be put at greater risk if a settlement is inordinately delayed. This fact should not have been lost on the U.S. or the *mujahideen." Dawn* pointedly added that "unilateral action

simply cannot help either in clarifying matters or in promoting the cause of a political settlement; it cannot be an extension of our hospitality to the *mujahideen* or of our friendly relations with the U.S."

The resistance leaders then stated, in a second response to the cease-fire proposal, that they would never negotiate "with a Soviet puppet" but that they would be ready to "negotiate directly with the Soviets."[3] The Government of Pakistan seemed to be reacting to the *Dawn* article when it said, through a Foreign Office spokesman, that Pakistan "would support genuine efforts of reconciliation but felt that Kabul's recent cease-fire offer was unlikely to be accepted by those to whom it was addressed unless linked to a withdrawal." The spokesman added that Pakistan would not comment on the proposal because it "was not an issue under negotiation in the Geneva peace process."[4]

The impression that Najibullah's cease-fire offer was "not an isolated act but part of a much broader Soviet design," as Jim Hoagland put it in the *Washington Post,*[5] was reinforced when Eduard Shevardnadze and Anatoliy Dobrynin, the former longtime Soviet Ambassador in Washington who had become Gorbachev's foreign affairs adviser in the Secretariat of the Communist Party, arrived in Kabul on January 5. Their trip, according to the *Times* of London was "a visible demonstration that movement may be afoot in the Soviet position on Afghanistan."[6] When Shevardnadze and Dobrynin departed Kabul, after a series of secret talks with the Kabul leadership, Shevardnadze made a number of statements that seemed intended to reassure the West that a process of national reconciliation would indeed lead to a withdrawal of the Soviet troops. National reconciliation, said Shevardnadze, would hasten the day when there would be "an early return to their homeland of the Soviet troops." "This event," Shevardnadze pointed out, "is not behind the mountains."[7]

I was not informed of the contents of the Kabul discussions. The Soviets continued at that stage to take the position that questions relating to the internal political situation of Afghanistan were not within my mandate and should not be dealt with in the Geneva negotiations. But I had the impression that the Kabul discussions had not been particularly cordial and productive. Therefore, Shevardnadze's optimistic statements at the airport were presumably intended not only to reassure the West but also to send a message to the Kabul leadership to the effect that the Soviet Union was determined to leave and that the Afghans should get their act together.

The trip to Islamabad by Armacost, accompanied by Robert Oakley, a senior specialist in Afghan affairs of the National Security Council, produced equally unclear results. They arrived in Pakistan shortly after Najibullah had delivered a speech in the presence of a large number of Western journalists. In his speech, marking the start of the cease-fire, he said that the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops depended upon the acceptance of the cease-fire by the resistance leaders. In a commentary in *The Muslim* on Armacost's trip, Maleeha Lodhi reported that U.S. officials were concerned that Pakistan would be willing to compromise on the time frame for withdrawal. "Washington has let it be known it wants Soviet troops out in four months," she said, "while Islamabad may come around to agreeing to an eighteen-month time table."[8]

On his departure from Islamabad Armacost said in reply to questions about Najibullah's initiative that "[i]t is the deed that counts and the deed that is most important is the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan." It was reported that Armacost had refused to talk to the resistance leaders. Their spokesman told *The Muslim:* "We tried to meet the American dignitary but failed."[9]

Pakistan was at the time under heavy internal pressure. The country was threatened with political and social destabilization brought about by riots in Karachi and elsewhere that were blamed on Afghan refugees. So was the upsurge in heroin and gun smuggling, as large amounts of money poured in from the West. Religious tensions had increased as insurgent Afghan *mullahs* appealed for support from fundamentalists in Pakistan. There were fears that if the war dragged on, generations of homeless, fanaticized children in the refugee camps would become recruits for terrorism, as in Lebanon. Additional tensions emerged when India placed its army on maximum alert, citing a Pakistani military buildup along the border in the Punjab and Kashmir regions. Talks had to be arranged between the foreign ministers of the two governments, and President Zia traveled to New Delhi for discussions with Prime Minister Gandhi.

At a rally on a sports field outside Peshawar on January 17, the seven main resistance parties, in an uncharacteristic show of unity, rejected in more formal terms the cease-fire proposal and pledged to fight until a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops took place. "This show of unity has dashed all Soviet hopes of a split in the resistance," said Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.[10] Resistance officials criticized the response of Pakistan to the Afghan government initiative. Pakistani state radio and television ignored the resistance rally, lavishing attention instead on the arrival of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kovalyev.

Journalists and commentators seemed utterly disconcerted by all the traveling and consultations. Their confusion—which I shared—seemed well expressed in the title of an article in *L'Humanité* of Paris that read: "L'Afghanistan, dans un mois, dans un an?"

We were obviously living through what is now called a "defining moment." When I met Armacost in his office on January 21 he seemed confused, somewhat irritated, and worried. He told me that the Soviets had taken a number of steps but that it was not clear if the policy decisions that a settlement required had, in fact, been taken in Moscow. "National reconciliation seems to imply a predominant role for the PDPA in any coalition government," Armacost said. The Soviets, in his opinion, were delaying a commitment to a withdrawal time frame. "If an agreement on reconciliation is sought before an agreement on the time frame," he pointed out, "it would be very difficult to proceed."

Washington missed no opportunity to make it unmistakably clear that a time frame for withdrawal constituted its overriding concern. According to Armacost there was a "huge" conceptual difference between the American position regarding the new Afghan government and the Soviet approach to national reconciliation. "That matter should be discussed with someone not associated with either side, for instance, former king Zahir Shah, who could then, in an interim capacity, act as a moderator of discussions between the various factions involved,"

he told me. In an ironic tone he added that the United States would help the Soviets get out of Afghanistan but would not give them "easy credit" in view of the "assistance" that the United States had received from the Soviets in Vietnam.

In New York I had been introduced at the beginning of the year to my new Soviet interlocutor, Ambassador Roland Timerbaev, who had been appointed First Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Vasily Safronchuk was appointed by the Secretary General to an Undersecretary General post traditionally held by a Soviet official. Timerbaev, an experienced diplomat, became very well liked at the U.N., mainly because of his easy manner and his lack of rigidity. At our first meeting he made clear to me that he thought that the invasion of Afghanistan had been a major blunder.

Timerbaev seemed very doubtful when I said that Shanawaz had told me that the new Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Abdul Sattar, and Yuli Vorontsov had agreed, at a meeting in Moscow in December 1986, that the next Geneva round of talks, which was supposed to start on February 11, should be postponed. After he checked with Moscow, Timerbaev told me that it was Sattar who had proposed a postponement and that Vorontsov had said nothing. The Soviet Union was prepared reluctantly to agree if Afghanistan went along. Timerbaev did not disguise his annoyance. I consulted Kabul, and Dost brought a positive reply when he presented his credentials as the new Afghan Ambassador to the U.N. I then announced that the round of negotiations would start on February 25.

On January 24 Pérez de Cuéllar and I left New York for to Kuwait to attend the fifth summit meeting of the Islamic Conference. Upon arrival in Kuwait City we were taken to the most lavish, indeed extravagantly luxurious, accommodations. The Kuwaiti Government had built for the summit a conference center consisting of a large complex of very modern buildings, including two or three with magnificent apartments in which delegations were comfortably lodged. In the large suite that was assigned to me everything was imported; it seemed as if a special effort had been made to buy the most expensive items, whether pieces of furniture or towels. The surrounding gardens were made up with pots of flowers flown in from Paris.

As usual, a meeting was arranged between the Secretary General and the President of Pakistan. Zia was obviously making a special effort to show us that his relations with both the Soviets and the Americans were excellent. His discussions with Kovalyev and with Armacost had left him with the impression that a "miracle" was indeed possible and might happen soon. What he then said did not seem to suggest, however, that the superpowers were prepared to adopt the kind of convergent attitudes that the "miracle" required.

"The Americans are not spoilers," the President insisted, "and the Soviets want to withdraw." Zia explained that Armacost had insisted only "that absolute priority should be given to the achievement of a short time frame for withdrawal." The Secretary General thanked the President, and the discussion moved on to other matters—the war between Iran and Iraq, Cambodia, Cyprus. In diplomacy one is condemned to attend many meetings in quiet desperation.

The following morning as I drove towards the conference building I could see Yaqub at the entrance talking to the resistance leaders, who were also attending the conference. I immediately approached Yaqub and shook hands with him and with all the Afghans. It was all very civil, even cordial, and at a certain point one of them drew me aside and said: "Mr. Cordovez, some of us think that it is essential that we meet soon." I suggested that we should do so in Kuwait, during the summit, but I was told that it would be better to do it later. I suppose that the problem, really, was that only "some" were ready to have a formal meeting with me. As we talked I wanted a photographer to come quickly to record the scene, but none seemed to be around. Usually they are not there when one needs them.

Walking around the magnificent imported gardens of the conference center, Yaqub and I had long conversations about the difficulties we were facing. Obviously the main problem continued to be a total lack of trust. Yaqub himself felt that the Soviets were serious and that they had moved significantly in the right direction, but he noted that these impressions were not shared by other members of his Government. Yaqub also agreed with the Soviets on the need for all concerned to push "their" respective Afghans toward some sort of arrangement that would enable a new, broadly acceptable, government to emerge in Kabul.

Yaqub used for the first time the expression "break china," which was to become a code word between us in all future discussions. If Pakistan could be sure, he explained, that the Soviet Union was indeed interested in the establishment of a government in which the PDPA would not necessarily play a predominant role, then Pakistan would be ready to "break china"—curtail assistance to the resistance in order to force its leaders' cooperation in the formation of a coalition government.

Yaqub gave me to understand that for a number of reasons Pakistan was not ready at that point to "break china." Zia and some of his closest advisers were not convinced of the Soviet Union's good faith regarding the formation of a new Afghan government. He did not mention specifically the United States but implied that Washington was even less inclined than Pakistan to believe the Soviets, let alone to break china.

I stressed throughout my conversations with Yaqub that even if there were problems with respect to a new Afghan government it was necessary to continue the negotiations relating to the time frame for Soviet withdrawal. If the position of the United States and Pakistan was not as "extreme" as the Soviets thought, the Soviets might be able to drop the linkage that they had gradually, but increasingly forcefully, established between setting a time frame for withdrawal and achieving national reconciliation. When Yaqub asked what the Soviets would consider not to be an "extreme" position on the time frame, I said "one year," and he seemed to think that was quite reasonable.

I told Yaqub that I was becoming increasingly concerned about what might happen at the next round of negotiations. If the linkage concept were to be formally imposed, we could spend years trying to reach a settlement. I felt that

the next round should be used for independent movement on the time frame and for some kind of unwritten agreement under which everybody would promote the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul.

Everything that Yaqub said reinforced my impression that since the beginning of the year it had become increasingly evident to all concerned that the efforts toward a political solution of the Afghan conflict should proceed on two tracks, one to finalize the settlement and the other to promote national reconciliation. We had so far failed, however, to reach any understanding on the nature of the relationship between the two tracks or on the manner in which each of them could feed or promote movement in the other.

On my way back to New York I stopped in London, where I met Lady Young, the Minister of State in charge of Afghan affairs, in her office in the House of Lords. She told me that most European governments had started to believe that the Soviets wanted a settlement. I then realized how important my trip to Moscow would be for my own efforts to promote further and more specific indications of Soviet good intentions.

Before going to Moscow I decided to talk to Dr. Armand Hammer. Although I had not seen him for some time I knew that he was supposed to see President Reagan and that he had also planned a trip to Islamabad and Moscow. Dr. Hammer received me in his office in Los Angeles and told me again the attempts he had made soon after the invasion to work out a deal, the willingness that Brezhnev had shown, and the strong opposition of Zbigniew Brzezinski to any kind of agreement with the Soviets. I stressed that President Reagan should not fail to take advantage of the opportunity that the Soviets were now offering to ensure a Soviet troop withdrawal, something that Reagan had so very forcefully demanded. Hammer, the old fox that he was, said: "It would also be the best way to divert attention from the Iran-contra scandal!"

I asked Dr. Hammer to talk to Zia and Reagan about using their influence to persuade the *mujahideen* leaders to work toward the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan without reducing the pressure for withdrawal within a short time frame. I told him that former King Zahir Shah and a number of respectable Afghans living in Europe and in Saudi Arabia should also be persuaded to step forward and become involved in a process to set up a new government. Such a process would certainly allow a smoother withdrawal and would also conform to the stated interests of both the United States and Pakistan. Dr. Hammer promised to do what he could, and we agreed to meet in Moscow.

Timerbaev and Safronchuk were very excited before I left for Moscow. When I told them that I would have to convince their authorities to go to Geneva with a one-year proposal on the time frame for withdrawal, they felt that that was not an unreasonable proposition.

I arrived in Moscow with Raymond Sommereyns and Vladimir Kolesnikov on February 9. The following day, after lunch with Vorontsov—who told me that vodka had been eliminated by *perestroika* "but not for especially esteemed guests"—we had a private meeting at which I readily concluded that Yaqub's

recent visit had been, once again, an unmitigated disaster. Vorontsov said that Yaqub had started to make all kinds of threats and that the Soviets had been forced to "hit him on the head." "The Pakistanis are simply not ready," he stressed. Evidently the Soviets had demanded that Pakistan should "break china," and Yaqub had refused.

The following day I had a meeting with Shevardnadze. While Vorontsov had given me a very professional account of the discussions with Yaqub, Shevardnadze expressed his disappointment and frustration in more personal terms. He had obviously worked very hard trying to move ahead and had encountered many difficulties in Kabul and in trying to convince his own people. He presumably expected that Yaqub would help him. Instead, Yaqub had mentioned two possible "variables": "a short time frame and Najibullah can stay or a longer time frame but Najibullah leaves." Shevardnadze very angrily added: "I told him that there was a third 'variable': Najibullah stays and we stay." He then told me that Pakistan's attitude reflected the determination of the United States to humiliate the Soviets. "They want nothing less than Soviet claudication," he added, "which is what they suffered in Vietnam."

Although the atmosphere was not particularly propitious I felt that I should nonetheless speak about the centrality of the time frame in all participants' subsequent efforts to reach a settlement. I told Shevardnadze, Vorontsov, and Kozirev that, whether or not it was reasonable, the fact was that nothing short of an agreed-upon time frame would convince the United States that the Soviet Union was willing, in good faith, to take its troops out of Afghanistan. They did not argue with me but repeated time and again that the settlement could not be effectively implemented unless all concerned tried to persuade the Afghans to form a new government in Kabul.

During one of the official meetings I received a written message from Dr. Hammer inviting me to the apartment that he kept in Moscow. The message also said that he had made "progress." Rich Jacobs, his personal assistant, came to pick me up in a Soviet limousine, and Dr. Hammer received me in a typically Soviet apartment. A Russian maid helped with the drinks and Dr. Hammer showed me the beautiful paintings that he had bought shortly after the Russian Revolution.

Dr. Hammer had told Reagan and Zia what I had asked him to say. Both had obviously listened politely and said nothing. He was going to see the former Afghan King in Rome. We talked for about an hour, and then I had to leave because I had been invited to a Bolshoi performance of *Giselle*. Dr. Hammer told me that Gregory Peck was in town and suggested that we have dinner together the following day. Unfortunately I was returning to New York in the morning. Contrary to the predictions of Timerbaev and Safronchuk, my Moscow trip had not been particularly successful.

On my return I did not hide my frustration when I met Armacost in Washington on February 19. I complained that Pakistan had notified me that the next round of negotiations should not exceed eight days, an obvious indication of lack of interest and readiness. Referring to Moscow, I said that, if everybody felt that

there should be a new government in Kabul, Soviet insistence that all concerned cooperate was not unreasonable.

Armacost said that the problem was Soviet insistence that national reconciliation be "sponsored" by the present regime and lead to the establishment of a coalition with a predominant PDPA role. That was not what the Soviets had told me, I said, and neither the United States nor Pakistan would know what the Soviets were prepared to accept unless they were willing to tackle the subject. The Soviets were not prepared to give me any detailed explanation of their intentions, I pointed out, because they still maintained that the internal situation of Afghanistan was not within my mandate. They had, however, repeatedly said that the new government should be neutral. Was there not a way of testing their determination to move in that direction?

Armacost simply repeated that national reconciliation should be "managed" by somebody who enjoyed the respect of all sides. When I asked if he meant somebody like the former King he replied: "I think you are on the right track." I left no doubt that I had already tried to persuade the Soviets to come to Geneva with a fresh proposal for a short time frame, and I assured Armacost that I would do likewise during the negotiations. I also told him that, things being what they were, I did not expect to be successful.

Before leaving for Geneva I briefed the Ambassadors of the European Community. Much to their surprise I was very pessimistic. I reminded them that I had always felt that an understanding between Moscow and Washington was essential to conclude a settlement. The problems that Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev were facing at that point, I added, were very well described in an article in the *Economist* titled "When Giants Lie Bound," parts of which I read out to them:

> For the moment, the arms-for-Iran scandal has paralyzed American foreign policy. . . . Until and unless he restores his authority . . . it will be positively dangerous for Mr. Reagan to venture out into the world—because anybody he negotiates with is bound to try to exploit his weakness at home. [Mr. Gorbachev] has so far had no success in persuading the Afghan guerrillas to let him negotiate his way out of their country, even though he seems willing to pay a stiff price for a deal. . . . Yet even to talk about pulling the Soviet army out of anywhere it has marched into—this would be only the third time in forty years, after Austria in 1955 and Finland's Porkkala peninsula in 1956—is deeply disliked by Russia's conservatives.[11]

I told the E.C. Ambassadors that as far as I knew nothing concrete had taken place in terms of organizing a coalition in Kabul. I was afraid that at Geneva we would face a "chicken-and-egg" situation; the Soviet Union would take the position that the formation of a new government should come first, and the United States would insist on an agreement on the time frame for withdrawal. Perhaps the Soviet Union was right in practical terms and the United States in political terms—but as long as both maintained their positions there would be no settlement.

II

On February 25 we started a round of negotiations at Geneva. Officially it was round Seven "C," but it was, in fact, the ninth in the series that had started in June 1982. I met for the first time Abdul Wakil, the new Foreign Minister of the Kabul régime, a close friend and political associate of Najibullah. A brash politician who had often been at odds with the party leadership, he seemed uneasy in his new job but determined to show that he was capable of dealing with complex diplomatic issues. It was always extremely difficult to have a quiet talk with him, as I had become used to having with Yaqub and Dost. During the negotiations Wakil was mercurial and often obstreperous but toward the end I had the impression that he had mellowed, that he had a lively mind, and that he was capable of being inclusive in his political thinking.

At our first meeting Wakil raised a number of points, the most important being the border issue and the participation of Iran in the negotiations. My immediate impression was that he was trying to postpone any discussion about the withdrawal time frame. My whole strategy during the past year had been to isolate the time frame for withdrawal as the only outstanding issue and therefore I was not inclined to reopen a discussion on any of the points that Wakil had mentioned, certainly not at that stage. I complained to Kozirev, who evidently was also having adjustment problems with Wakil.

On his way to Geneva Yaqub had made a stopover in Moscow. He told me that his talks with the Soviets had been quite cordial and implied, in a mysterious tone, that he had been able to initiate with the Soviets a parallel dialogue regarding national reconciliation, the contents and details of which were to remain confidential. (He, too, was trying to make me feel that national reconciliation was none of my business!) Yaqub also told me, referring to our talks in Kuwait, that, having checked with his colleagues in Pakistan, he was not able to accept a one-year time frame. When I told him what Wakil had said he pretended to be very annoyed—he described Wakil's position as "stonewalling" and "nit-picking"—but I had the distinct impression that he was not in a hurry.

Wakil made clear to me that he was not prepared to discuss national reconciliation and then proposed a time frame of twenty-two months for the withdrawal of troops. He pointed out that it was the last concession that his Government was prepared to make.

Yaqub at first did not seem disturbed. He even talked about the need for both sides to adopt a "level of tolerance." This was on Friday, February 27. On Monday, March 2, he was extremely bothered and tense. He told me that Pakistan, too, wanted to raise a number of points, among them, of course, the consultations with the refugees, and then said that Kabul's proposal on the time frame was unacceptable. Yaqub and all the members of his staff seemed extremely nervous and uptight. Something was obviously happening back home.

I subsequently read in a newspaper that a report by an Indian journalist that quoted Abdul Qadeer Khan, the director of Pakistan's nuclear program, as saying that Pakistan possessed a nuclear bomb had created a stir in India and Pakistan. The Pakistanis were in any case quite upset because since the begin-

ning of the round there had been a number of bombing raids by Afghan aircraft on Pakistani villages. Yaqub told the press that Kabul was deliberately trying to jeopardize the negotiations.

Kozirev confirmed that, at that stage, Wakil's proposal could not be changed. The "chicken-and-egg" situation that I had predicted then emerged with all its paralyzing potential when he said that in the absence of any Pakistani cooperation to promote national reconciliation it was impossible for the Soviet Union to move on the time frame. He told me that Yuri Vorontsov—"the star Soviet diplomat" who was now supervising Soviet diplomacy on Afghanistan—was in Geneva leading the Soviet delegation to disarmament negotiations with the United States. Kozirev said that Vorontsov would have a meeting with Yaqub, implying that a parallel Soviet-Pakistani dialogue had indeed started. I was subsequently told that Vorontsov had refused to meet with Yaqub.

At that point Yaqub seemed very angry because according to news reports Shevardnadze had told Thai officials in Bangkok that Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan within twenty-two months. "This is it," he told me, waving the cable news dispatch in front of me. "They are notifying the world that there will be no further movement." Yaqub added that he was going to suggest to his Government that he return to Islamabad. I told Kozirev that I wanted to have a meeting with Vorontsov.

Vorontsov said that Yaqub had been told in Moscow that a settlement would certainly facilitate an improvement of relations with Pakistan and that discussions should be held for that purpose, but only after the conclusion of the Geneva negotiations. Pakistan was still refusing to cooperate in the promotion of national reconciliation, and this was a major obstacle to a swift settlement, which was otherwise possible. I repeated that only an agreement on a short time frame for withdrawal would encourage the United States and Pakistan to be more helpful and asked if it was possible "to do a Gorbachev"—to make a bold move such as Gorbachev had made in the disarmament negotiations. Vorontsov said that the Afghans and the Pakistanis preferred a "bazaar approach" and that I should try to convince the Pakistanis to increase their offer a little. He would persuade the Afghans to make another concession, "and then, in accordance with a Russian proverb, we can cut the sin in half." He "anticipated" a new Afghan move in a couple of days.

I then had a tempestuous meeting with Yaqub, who told me that the Soviet Union was not ready for a settlement, that the Kabul leadership was playing games, and that therefore he was leaving Geneva. I tried to pacify him and ended up telling him that he was obliged to stay as long as there was movement. I added that if Wakil made a new proposal and he, Yaqub, nonetheless left, I would denounce him publicly as "the spoiler" of the negotiations. Yaqub reluctantly conceded that he would not leave if Wakil moved, but it was quite evident that he did not believe that there would be a new proposal by the Afghans. I am sure that he went straight to his hotel to pack his bags.

When I talked to Wakil—who was not supposed to know that Vorontsov and I had met—I stressed the importance of a further move. I argued that a one- or two-month reduction would not do and that a time frame proposal of eighteen

months would, at long last, put the two sides within negotiating range. I did not tell Wakil that Yaqub had threatened to leave lest Wakil himself abandon the negotiations. Such was the atmosphere prevailing in the bazaar. He said nothing to indicate that he would table a new proposal. I was extremely worried.

The following morning Wakil proposed an eighteen-month time frame. He said that it was a "take-it-or-leave-it" proposal, the last concession, and so on. I was thoroughly relieved. Yaqub then walked in, showing all the signs of extreme strain and tension, barely acknowledged my presence, and ostentatiously requested one of his advisers to give him what was undoubtedly the text of a farewell speech. Members of the Pakistani delegation had earlier told the press that the negotiations were about to collapse.

Yaqub and all the members of his staff looked shocked when I said that Wakil had made a new eighteen-month proposal. Yaqub folded the paper that he was about to read and agreed that he would give me his formal reaction at a subsequent meeting. We then had a very relaxed lunch together. Yaqub told me that the report on the bomb, which he stressed had been subsequently denied, had created enormous tension between Islamabad and Washington and had endangered a $4 billion aid package. (Seymour Hersh published years later, on March 29, 1993, a full story of that episode in the *New Yorker* magazine.)

Yaqub made a counterproposal of seven months, which greatly upset and disappointed Wakil and Kozirev. Having reduced their time frame proposal by six months, they felt that the least they could expect was an increase by Pakistan of more than one month. It was therefore Wakil's turn to have a tantrum. I was told by the U.N. Protocol office that he was about to leave and I immediately invited him to my office. My intention was to suggest to him a formula designed to facilitate an agreement, but he was so annoyed that I did not dare mention it. The meeting became nothing more than a farewell call.

At a press conference the following day I tried to convey the impression that we had broken the back of the time frame issue. Most commentators and analysts seemed to agree, and I sensed that the negotiations had finally acquired much needed credibility and respectability. That the Soviets troops might leave Afghanistan was at long last seen as a possibility. "Light and the Afghan Tunnel" was the title of an editorial in the *New York Times* for March 14, 1987. Referring to the narrowing of the gap, the *Times* said "it's significant, as the U.N.'s Diego Cordovez contends." "And since there is agreement on the rest of the package it might seem, to recall a phrase, that peace is at hand in Afghanistan" the editorial concluded. The *Times* considered that if Gorbachev was ready to pay the price, "[t]hat would be the most dramatic Russian pullback since the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Austria three decades ago. The fall of Kabul would be as humbling as the fall of Saigon was for the United States."

III

My talks with Vorontsov and Kozirev during the February round of negotiations led me to the conclusion that an essay by Soviet analyst Igor Belyayev in

Literaturnaya Gazeta contained a good description of the Soviet Union's position regarding the relationship between the formation of a new government and the withdrawal of troops. "It is important always to remember," Belyayev said, "that the more energetic the process of national reconciliation develops, the sooner will the limited military contingent of Soviet troops return home. . . . [T]he General [Zia] still insists on the early return home of the Soviet troops. Nobody objects to this, however, never forgetting that the more successful the process of national reconciliation is (incidentally, it can be facilitated), the sooner the withdrawal."[12]

Before leaving Geneva I invited Kozirev for a walk in the park of the Palais des Nations. I told him that if Belyayev was right it would be foolish to convene another round of negotiations until national reconciliation had made progress. It was essential, I said, to achieve a degree of "synchronization" between the efforts toward the formation of a new government and those intended to reach an agreement on the time frame for withdrawal. There was an established procedure for the negotiation of a time frame agreement, I added, but there was nothing, not even a semblance of a "mechanism," for the promotion of national reconciliation.

Since I realized that Kozirev shared my concern, I decided to go one step further and suggested the institution of a mechanism to "facilitate"—that was the word that had been used by Belyayev—national reconciliation. I told him that immediately after the first round of negotiations, during a similar conversation with Gavrilov, I had pointed out that progress in the negotiations would make it increasingly necessary to promote the formation of a new government. In that conversation I had referred for the first time to "national reconciliation," a term that had subsequently been embraced by Najibullah and had thus become, in the opinion of Western governments, a Communist slogan. Regardless of semantics, the process should have started much earlier and would acquire practical meaning only if it was possible to set in motion an intra-Afghan dialogue.

I told Kozirev that I was fully aware that as an international official I was not supposed to have any role in that context and added that I was not particularly willing to do so. I felt, at the same time, that unless something was done to get an intra-Afghan dialogue off the ground, we would continue to face the slowing-down effects of the chicken-and-egg problem. Granted that national reconciliation fell neither within the purview of the Geneva process nor within my own mandate, I was nonetheless duty bound to prevent a paralysis of the negotiations.

Kozirev said nothing to imply that he questioned my concern about the fate of the negotiations or about my right to give some ideas to avoid a disaster. His only comment was that the eighteen-month time frame for withdrawal was indeed the last proposal that we could expect before national reconciliation showed concrete results. I stressed that the idea that the process of national reconciliation could be sponsored by the Kabul regime or by the PDPA was unacceptable. It was impossible to expect Pakistan to "break china" in such circumstances, and the United States would remain utterly suspicious of Soviet

intentions. The mechanism or procedure that I was advocating should be seen by the United States and Pakistan as neutral and objective.

Kozirev listened quietly except when I said that it had been a mistake to appoint the head of the secret police to head the government. At that point he interjected that George Bush, who had headed the CIA, was a candidate for President of the United States.

I told Kozirev that in my view there were, in the main, three groups of Afghans that should participate in any process designed to bring about the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul. These three groups were: the PDPA; the refugees and *mujahideen* leaders; and the Afghans living elsewhere—in Europe, Saudi Arabia, and the United States—whom Armacost had once described as the Afghan "Diaspora." They were mainly "technocrats" who had served in the government before the revolution and who rightly or wrongly were described by both Najibullah and the resistance leaders as "monarchists." There were, in addition, a number of Afghans who did not fall into any of those categories, such as those living in Kabul who were not members of the PDPA, whose participation could be arranged once the process was in motion.

I suggested that, to start a dialogue, a meeting be held, perhaps in Peshawar, of a nucleus of the three main groups of Afghans, which would be gradually enlarged. The first meeting would be convened by somebody acceptable to all the participants as a neutral personality. I then meekly mentioned the former King, who was admittedly objectionable to some *mujahideen* leaders. He should, I suggested, be persuaded to pledge formally that he had no intention of heading the future government. If a first meeting was held I was sure that a process would evolve leading toward the holding of a traditional Loya Jirga and hence toward a negotiated decision to establish a coalition government.

Kozirev seemed attracted to the idea. He thought for a few minutes and then said that it would be better to hold the first meeting in Geneva. "You will have to be extremely careful," he added, stressing that some people in Moscow would have very strong reservations about my involvement. But it was obvious that he agreed that unless the Afghans were actively encouraged to do something, national reconciliation had no chance of producing the kind of results that were needed to conclude the settlement.

Back in New York I found that the eighteen-month time frame proposal had indeed created the impression that a settlement was possible and even imminent. This impression was reinforced by statements made by Henry Kissinger on his return from a Moscow visit. Stephen Rosenfeld, in an OP-ED article in the *Washington Post* for February 27 quoted Kissinger as having said that he had asked a senior Communist whether it was possible for the Soviets to stand by while a Communist government collapsed. According to Kissinger, "[h]e replied that the Kabul government was not Communist and technically not even Socialist—the presumed and intriguing implication being that such a regime was therefore not eligible for Soviet rescue under the 'Brezhnev Doctrine'." Rosenfeld's comment was that if the Soviets were serious about a policy along those lines, "it would mark a turn in foreign policy more far-reaching and of far

greater immediate interest to the United States than all the internal reforms Gorbachev has on the drawing board."

I went to see Henry Kissinger in his Park Avenue office on March 24. He confirmed all the reports that had been published and told me that Afghanistan now seemed a secondary problem for the Soviets. Their overwhelming preoccupation was President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. He felt that it was necessary for the United States to test Soviet intentions and that I should continue to press Moscow to produce a short time frame and to leave national reconciliation to "Afghan domestic evolution." I asked him if he thought that a one-year time frame for withdrawal would be acceptable to the United States. "It should not be longer," he replied. I told him that we were facing a chicken-and-egg situation in the negotiations because the Soviets wanted to see a coalition government in Kabul before accepting a short time frame. They presumably wanted to prevent a massacre. "They are right," Kissinger said, and added that the United States should not set any conditions regarding the government in Kabul. "Washington should only insist on a swift withdrawal," he added.

The Soviets were at that point extremely annoyed with the Pakistanis, who had not been, in their view, very helpful at Geneva. "Their attitude was conditioned by the discussions in the U.S. Congress regarding a new aid package," Ambassador Alexander Belonogov told me. I told Timerbaev that Wakil had not been outstandingly cooperative and had left Geneva after I had convinced Yaqub to stay as long as there was movement. It was essential, I said, to set in motion a mechanism to promote national reconciliation and explained the ideas that I had discussed with Kozirev. I said that the meeting ("tea party") of Afghans that would be held to initiate the process could take place in Geneva, as suggested by Kozirev, but that in my view the former King should go first to Pakistan to "establish his credentials" in the refugee camps. I was prepared to persuade the former King to do so if all concerned supported my idea of the mechanism. Timerbaev took notes in a manila folder and promised to consult his Government. He, too, seemed worried that some people in Moscow would veto my involvement.

When we had lunch at Le Cirque, our usual briefing place, Shahnawaz told me that Yaqub, whom he had seen in London, was very optimistic after Geneva. Yaqub had spoken about a two-track effort to conclude the settlement that would undoubtedly be successful. I made my point about the need for a mechanism and asked if he thought that Pakistan would cooperate. Shahnawaz felt that the increasing number of Afghan air strikes against Pakistani villages, which in his view constituted nothing more than crude Soviet pressure tactics, were not particularly helpful, but he expected that Zia would encourage the resistance leaders to be more forthcoming. Shahnawaz made no secret of his satisfaction when I emphasized that the former King could play an historic role. We agreed that he would discreetly try to find out Islamabad's possible reaction to the ideas that I had explained.

I had a number of conversations with Dost, who felt very much like a man in political exile since becoming Ambassador to the U.N. I did not know the extent

to which he reflected the views of the government in Kabul. Given the circumstances of his resignation, he obviously did not get along with Najibullah and Wakil. At the same time I had always felt that he was able to give me objective opinions about people and events. (I have always considered that Dost gave me the most accurate account of the assassination of American Ambassador Adolf Dubs in February 1979.) He could, therefore, be extremely useful to me in the development of the ideas that I had discussed with Kozirev.

Dost felt that Najibullah would be prepared to pay a high price for the formation of a coalition government. Najibullah would even consider involving the former King, "who would be welcomed in Kabul at any time," he added. Dost also assured me that "good people," such as some of the Afghans who were living in Europe, would be accepted as members of a coalition government and that there were only a few individuals whom the Afghan people would reject outright. But nothing seemed to make an impression in the West, according to Dost, because there were strong prejudices and because there were people in the Government of Pakistan who were prepared to accept nothing less than the total annihilation of the Kabul regime.

Michael Armacost was in Moscow on March 16 and 17 for talks on a wide range of East-West issues. The talks were expected to pave the way for a superpower summit. "The possibility of progress in the months to come represents a potential breakthrough," he said when the talks were concluded. On Afghanistan he reported that the Soviets had declared in unequivocal terms their intention to withdraw. He added that he had seen some changes in "the Soviet formulation of national reconciliation" in the sense that they had acknowledged that any such process would require taking into account the views of the resistance as well as the role of those associated with previous regimes, including monarchists. He pointed out that "the issue of the Kabul government's ability to supervise national reconciliation is the one on which the United States and the Soviet Union still differ."[13]

When I read Armacost's comments I felt that he would undoubtedly agree that my ideas about the mechanism for national reconciliation fitted precisely the circumstances and requirements that he had identified in Moscow. We met in his office on April 2, and he opened the discussion saying that it was becoming increasingly clear that the Soviets had taken the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. He added that the eighteen-month proposal was an indication of their flexibility.

Armacost had acknowledged to his interlocutors in Moscow that the latest Soviet position on the time frame was useful and that the Afghans living abroad should participate in the efforts of national reconciliation. At the same time he had pointed out that the proposed time frame was still too long and that the notion that Najibullah would preside over the process of national reconciliation was unacceptable. Armacost had told the Soviets that "if they could not afford to do things differently they should simply leave the country as quickly as possible."

Armacost felt encouraged by the fact that the discussions in Moscow had focused on the right issues. Evidently considerable time had been spent on the

question of national reconciliation. The Soviets had emphasized that the PDPA was an "existing reality" and that the resistance would have to negotiate with the Kabul regime. Armacost had repeated the U.S. position that "a party to the civil war could not organize and preside over a coalition process." The need for a "neutral figure" had been considered, and the Soviets had acknowledged that they had their "line to Rome." They had pointed out that the former King could have a role in the process of national reconciliation without presiding over it.

I told Armacost that at Geneva I had been alone pushing for a short time frame. From the beginning Yaqub had given the impression that he wanted to go back to Islamabad. His attitude and that of Wakil toward the end had led me to conclude that another round of negotiations should not take place until there was some understanding on national reconciliation. Kozirev had subsequently confirmed that further efforts on the time frame for withdrawal would be futile.

Armacost and I again met in Washington on April 9. I felt that since his trip to Moscow we had formed a much closer association in the search for a settlement. He realized that he no longer had to persuade me to press for a short withdrawal time frame, and he seemed much more willing to trust my judgment as to the timing of the next steps in the diplomatic process. When I explained my ideas concerning the setting in motion of a more neutral process of national reconciliation—I did so in private because I was aware that State Department "strict constructionists" had reservations about my involvement—he seemed interested and supportive.

At that point I started to detect differences between the United States and Pakistan regarding the priority, and even the relative importance, to be accorded to the formation of a new government in Kabul. For the United States the withdrawal of the Soviet troops had unquestionable priority, Washington seemed willing to share Pakistan's concern about the survival of Najibullah's régime only as long as it did not obstruct or delay a Soviet withdrawal. The United States seemed to be acting upon the assumption, which I was to be told repeatedly in the months ahead, that very soon after the withdrawal, everything "would fall into place." Pakistan was not so sure and preferred to play it safe. That presumably explained Yaqub's behavior in Geneva.

Relations between the United States and Pakistan remained strained as a result of the published reports, true or false, that Pakistan was at the threshold of nuclear capability. A new aid package, and Pakistan's request for AWACS (airborne warning and control system) planes to prevent Afghan air attacks against Pakistani villages were encountering increasing opposition in Congress. The *New York Times* said in an editorial on March 13 that "to renew aid would mock America's commitment to nuclear nonproliferation." The situation was not conducive to an understanding on a joint approach to the Afghan conflict, and Pakistan seemed hesitant in its relations with the resistance leaders. When we met on April 9 Armacost told me that Yaqub had not met with the *mujahideen* after Geneva and that there were many signs of confusion and tension.

I decided to talk to Yaqub, who was in Europe traveling with Prime Minister Junejo. I contacted Shaharyar Khan, who was in London as Ambassador,

and asked him to arrange a meeting. He called back to say that Yaqub would be happy to meet me in Brussels on April 13.

I arrived in Brussels in the morning and in the evening had a talk with Yaqub at the Sheraton Hotel. After a brief exchange in which we agreed that a two-track approach was desirable but nonexistent, I stressed the need to set in motion an intra-Afghan dialogue, noting that it would be very important to arrange for the former King to go first to Pakistan. I also underlined that the Soviets were very suspicious of Pakistani intentions. My own role would be mainly to promote mutual confidence regarding the process of national reconciliation. Yaqub did not express any opinion, but it was quite evident that he wholeheartedly supported my ideas. He immediately telephoned Junejo to suggest a meeting, and Junejo invited us for dinner at the Chateau du Stuyvenberg, a residence owned by the Belgian Government in which he was staying.

At the dinner, which was also attended by Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar, I again outlined the scheme. I was surprised to find that they reacted with enthusiasm. Junejo said that some of the *mujahideen* leaders were opposed to the former King but that the Government would "lean on them" just as soon as he returned to Islamabad. They all seemed to like the idea of holding the meeting in Geneva, which was distant from the leaders' home base. I had the impression that they saw that meeting as the first step toward "breaking china" and that they had already counted Gulbuddin Hekmatyar out. Junejo suggested that Yaqub and I meet again in Europe within a few weeks so that he could inform me of the leaders' reactions and so that we could coordinate our further efforts. I stressed the importance of moving fast, and Yaqub affirmed that the settlement could be concluded before the end of the year.

The following morning I had a quiet coffee in the Grand Place, which was as splendorous as ever. I felt confident that I had planted the seeds of an understanding among my interlocutors that would undoubtedly facilitate the early conclusion of the settlement. The Pakistani reaction had been as unpredictable as it was positive. Much hard work lay ahead, however, but at least everybody now seemed ready to cooperate.

IV

My optimism started to evaporate when several weeks after the meeting with Junejo I did not receive any information, let alone a formal reaction, from any of my interlocutors. I only saw indications, mainly in the press and in reports from friendly third parties, that each of them was confronting serious difficulties.

The Soviets admitted that they were embarrassed because there was no answer from Moscow. Timerbaev and Safronchuk speculated that discussions, still inconclusive, were taking place between Moscow and Kabul. Shahnawaz considered that continuing tensions between Washington and Islamabad over the "nuclear issue" constituted a severe complication, although the US Administration was making sustained efforts to overcome congressional opposition to a

new aid package. Total confusion seemed to prevail in Pakistan, as well as continuing tension between the Government and the resistance leaders.

I continued to feel that another round of negotiations would be futile, but inasmuch I had said in February that we would hold a new round in May, I was obliged to make a formal announcement that it would not take place. That only added to a widening perception that the diplomatic process was once again deadlocked. At the beginning of May I therefore decided to make another trip to Islamabad and Kabul. But both governments rejected my proposal.

Timerbaev and Safronchuk were furious. They told me that Wakil had ignored Moscow's advice, which had been that my visit be accepted, and that the situation in Kabul was deteriorating rapidly. The Kabul leadership was acting in strange ways, refusing to listen and generally foot dragging in the implementation of the measures that Moscow and Kabul had agreed were necessary to facilitate the conclusion of the settlement. Other reports, including a series of articles written from Kabul by Richard Weintraub for the *Washington Post,* indicated that there was increasing fractiousness in the ruling party and opposition to national reconciliation. An East European diplomat was quoted as saying: "There are factions and problems within the government. A lot of people are not reconciled to the new policy. Some are afraid for their jobs and even their lives. Others just don't want anything to do with those who went into exile and opposition."[14]

Steven Weisman, also writing from Kabul, reported in the *New York Times* that it was widely believed that three bomb explosions, in places frequented by Soviet and government officials, might have been set off by dissidents within the PDPA. The explosions coincided with the abrupt departure on May 4 of Babrak Karmal for Moscow, ostensibly for medical reasons. Diplomats in Kabul said that it was more likely that Karmal was being removed from the scene so that he would not become a focus for dissatisfaction in the party and the government.[15]

There were many contradictory reports about Karmal's departure. According to some, Najibullah was said to have seen Karmal off at the airport. Others maintained that Karmal was hustled off to an ignominious exile in the Soviet Union. There was even a report in *Die Welt* that Karmal had been involved in all kinds of intrigues against Najibullah and that, with the help of his brother, Mahmud Barialai, and other supporters, he had stirred up an intraparty struggle that had led to heated fights in one of which Najibullah had been wounded. It was also rumored that Karmal had been in touch with the resistance and that Najibullah had ordered his arrest. According to witnesses Karmal was arrested in front of the Chinese Embassy.[16]

Regardless of the veracity of these reports, Najibullah's efforts to start national reconciliation had evidently produced profound disarray within his party and the government. The Soviets seemed incapable of dealing with the situation. Living in Kabul was becoming more and more difficult for Soviet military and civilian personnel. It had become necessary to increase armed Soviet patrols in all the shopping districts—including the famous Chicken Street, where most of Kabul's jewelry and antique stores are located—because of attacks by hostile

Afghans. Fewer and fewer Soviets were seen in the narrow, dark lanes of the traditional bazaars.

In the meantime, a steady improvement in East-West relations was taking place, and there was talk in Moscow and Washington of "a new era in Soviet-American relations." But when Secretary of State Shultz visited Moscow in April, the two superpowers continued to exchange strong words and accusations regarding the Afghan conflict.

While in Moscow, Shultz made an unprecedented appearance on Soviet television and gave some very frank and direct replies to questions on Afghanistan. State Department officials told me that not all the Secretary's words had been translated into Russian. At one point Shultz said: "[The Afghans] want you to leave. And they don't want your military forces there. And it's been a very devastating war. . . . They want peace with you, but they don't want you occupying their country." The interviewer said that stopping the growing flow of arms to the rebels would be an "excellent" way to facilitate the removal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan "and I assure you, Mr. Secretary, and before the millions of spectators who are now listening to us, that this is the passionate wish of all the Soviet people."[17] When Armacost spoke before the Asia Society of Washington on April 29 he reiterated that what remained was for the Soviets "to take the tough decisions that will facilitate an early resolution of the [Afghan] conflict."[18]

On the eve of the departure of Yaqub for a visit to Washington, *The Muslim* seemed to express the prevailing uncertainty regarding the state of the diplomatic process when it recalled that following a similar trip in 1983 there had been a paralyzing deadlock in Geneva: "Against this background, there is justified public concern over the Foreign Minister's current visit. As a well-known thinker once said, '[H]istory repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, and the second time as farce.' Neither a tragedy nor a farce should be inflicted on the people of Pakistan."[19] The stated purpose of Yaqub's trip was once again to request the provision of AWAC planes. But in Pakistan much wider questions were being asked about the Government's determination to reach a settlement, about resistance attitudes, and about the nature of a political solution which would be acceptable to the United States.

When I met Yaqub in his suite at the Madison Hotel in Washington he seemed extremely tense. He was surrounded by Foreign Ministry and Embassy personnel. I referred to our conversation in Brussels and asked if any progress had been made in discussions with the *mujahideen* leaders. Yaqub answered tersely that the leaders were engaged in efforts to establish a *shura* (a traditional form of assembly or parliament) and that they seemed to be divided about a role for the former King. Yaqub obviously did not wish to tell me in the presence of so many advisers what was really happening. "We are not prepared to break china without knowing exactly the position of the Soviet Union," he said. I then gathered that he had continued to seek a parallel dialogue with the Soviets without any success. I also felt that it was futile to continue the discussion. The meeting lasted no more than fifteen minutes.

I went straight to the State Department to see Armacost. He told me that

Yaqub was disturbed because he had encountered many difficulties in his discussions concerning the AWAC. He agreed that the resistance seemed to be moving, with or without Pakistani backing, in a direction that was not consistent with the ideas that we had been discussing. Referring to the situation prevailing in Kabul and in Peshawar, he said that there were moments when things moved and others when it was advisable to wait for developments. He asked me to persuade the Soviets to talk to the Pakistanis, and I pointed out that that would be much easier if I knew what the Pakistanis wanted. "Perhaps they want to know from the horse's mouth what is the attitude towards the former King and your scheme for national reconciliation," he replied.

It was a time of confusion, indecision, and stalemate. The war had escalated. Fierce fighting was reported in at least six Afghan provinces. The *mujahideen* had more and more Stingers and Blowpipes. Cross-border attacks against Pakistani villages had increased, and the Pakistanis, without AWAC, had shot down a couple of Afghan planes. The Afghans in Kabul and in Peshawar were having uninterrupted disputes among themselves. Yaqub was told that he might have his AWAC and was received by President Reagan. But he did not get his talk with the Soviets, who were not talking to anyone. Washington was still waiting for developments. Wakil was visiting capitals of friendly countries. A Western diplomat told me that "the Russians would like to get out of Afghanistan, but they don't know how. And we in the West would like to cooperate and help them, but we don't know how either." I felt like throwing in the towel but decided that I should first go to Moscow to see if the Soviets had any new ideas.

V

It had become customary over the years that when a new leader was appointed in the Soviet Union the Secretary General of the United Nations was invited shortly thereafter to Moscow for a wide-ranging discussion of world affairs. This tradition was broken by Mikhail Gorbachev; more than two years had elapsed since he became Soviet leader before Pérez de Cuéllar received a formal invitation. The Secretary General then decided to visit not only the Soviet Union but also the two other Soviet republics that were members of the U.N. His decision was not appreciated by the Western governments and China, who had consistently questioned the membership of Byelorussia and the Ukraine as separate states.

Upon boarding an Aeroflot airliner in Geneva on June 23 we were told that we would have to wait because a high ranking official who was traveling to Moscow had been delayed. The official was Vorontsov, who when he arrived graciously apologized for the inconvenience. A few minutes after takeoff Vorontsov sat next to me and said that he was pleased to have an opportunity to talk before my arrival in Moscow. He said that he was extremely worried because utter confusion and disorder prevailed in Kabul.

According to Vorontsov, the Afghans needed time to sort out their affairs

and to settle the differences that had arisen when Najibullah had started to develop the national reconciliation plans agreed upon when Shevardnadze visited Kabul at the beginning of the year. Instead of helping, Vorontsov said, Pakistan and the United States were "sabotaging" those efforts by various means. It was necessary to allow the contacts that Najibullah had established with several sectors of the opposition to "mature." If the existing situation remained unchanged it would not be possible to conclude the settlement in the near future. The Soviet Union had expected that a final round of negotiations would take place in September. Vorontsov repeated time and again that Moscow was puzzled by the attitude of Pakistan and the United States at a time when his Government's determination to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan was apparent. He wanted to talk to Armacost as soon as possible.

I told Vorontsov that shortly after the negotiations started in 1982 I realized that in Pakistan and in several Western quarters there was very strong opposition to a possible settlement. Many people had political and financial interests in the continuation of the conflict, and when the Soviet Union took the position that withdrawal was conditional upon the formation of a coalition government in Kabul these people readily concluded that a settlement could be delayed or prevented by undermining national reconciliation. I personally felt, I added, that Armacost was working hard to convince skeptics in Congress and elsewhere that the Soviet Union was sincerely trying to extricate itself from Afghanistan. In my view Vorontsov's intended meeting with Armacost was accordingly both timely and necessary.

After a brief, unofficial reception by protocol personnel at Moscow airport, we left for Minsk, the Bielorussian capital, in a plush Soviet aircraft that was presumably reserved for members of the Soviet leadership and special guests. In Minsk, where we stayed two days, and then in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, we had to undergo intense official programs that included long lectures on the wonders of communism, visits to war monuments and museums, and colorful folkloric dancing and singing. In Ukraine one could feel the psychological effects of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor catastrophe. We were back in Moscow to start the official visit to the Soviet Union on Sunday, June 28.

The detour allowed me to have long talks with Soviet officials who accompanied us on the trip. Belonogov, the Soviet Ambassador to the U.N., Safronchuk, and Vladimir Kolesnikov had also come from New York. The calamitous situation in Kabul was not explained in great detail, nor, indeed, were the efforts that the Soviets said had been made to instill a sense of order and organization in the Afghans' plan of national reconciliation. I gathered that all such efforts were considered to have failed. A long list of accusations against Pakistan and the United States was also lodged. What worried me most was to learn that the situation in Kabul had reshaped divisions in the Soviet leadership concerning the withdrawal from Afghanistan. With increasing strong emphasis the military had taken the position that there should be no withdrawal if it was going to precipitate a bloodbath in Kabul.

Gorbachev implicitly confirmed that it was not the time to feel optimistic. In the exchanges with Pérez de Cuéllar he seemed to place much more interest and

emphasis on other matters, particularly disarmament, and when Pérez de Cuéllar raised the question of Afghanistan Gorbachev talked about the "Afghan problem" as if it was causing him enormous difficulties. Gorbachev emphasized that it would not matter "if the Afghans decided to have a king or an emperor."

Gorbachev then made a statement that was to prove very useful in my future discussions in Washington. He said that the Afghans should choose the regime that they wanted and that the Soviet Union would be pleased if they decided to have a "neutral" government that was therefore "not hostile" to the Soviet Union. This pronouncement was significant because it was the first time that the term "neutral" had been used by the Soviet leader instead of "nonaligned," which always created suspicions, and because instead of "friendly" Gorbachev had said "not hostile," which is qualitatively different.

Referring to the time frame for withdrawal, Gorbachev said that technically the Soviet Union could take its troops out "very quickly" but that many "friends" in Asia and Africa had expressed concern that the Soviet Union could "walk away" leaving behind a bloodbath. Gorbachev noted that the United States had been exploiting the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan to discredit Soviet foreign policy and that as soon as progress was made in Geneva the United States threw "spokes in its path." As long as the resistance leaders refused to acknowledge the "reality" of the Kabul regime it would be impossible for the Afghans to agree on the establishment of a coalition government and thus open the way to a settlement.

Following the meeting, the Soviet news agency Tass issued an official statement that, with regard to Afghanistan, read:

> The Afghan problem was touched upon. The efforts of the personal envoy of the United Nations Secretary General were commended. The interlocutors noted that the process of the settlement in both its internal and external aspects had started. Mikhail Gorbachev expressed the hope that it could yield a result not in remote future but in near future. "Our only wish is that Afghanistan should be a neutral and independent state friendly to the U.S.S.R. and not a base for hostile activity threatening the security of its neighbors," he said.

Leaving aside translation inconsistencies, it was the first official Soviet statement to acknowledge that the question of Afghanistan referred to more than "the situation around" Afghanistan and to admit that the "process" designed to achieve a settlement of the Afghan conflict involved both internal and external aspects. That was significant insofar as many Soviet bureaucrats of the old school continued to question my involvement in the consideration of issues other than those strictly within my mandate. On the other hand, it was obvious that the timing of Pérez de Cuéllar's meeting with Gorbachev had been inauspicious because the Soviet leader was unable to indicate if any new policy steps were envisaged in order to move the process forward.

There was, therefore, a wide sense of gloom, and the prospects of an early settlement were generally considered negligible. Shevardnadze spoke as if the Afghans in Kabul were a bunch of lunatics who should be left alone for some time until they had regained some degree of temperance. As if there were no

other problems, Wakil was seriously ill; he had undergone (in Kabul or Moscow, it was not clear) an emergency operation for peritonitis. I sent a message wishing him a swift recovery.

Back in New York I told Shahnawaz, Timerbaev, Dost, and Armacost (who came to see me accompanied again by Robert Oakley of the National Security Council) that in my view it had become unmistakably clear that we were facing a major deadlock in the negotiations. All concerned seemed, for one reason or another, unable to take the political decisions that were necessary to conclude a settlement. I was ready to consider any suggestions for future action, but I felt that in the prevailing circumstances any step taken in the diplomatic process that did not produce concrete and visible results could be fatal. In connection with national reconciliation I did not care if I was criticized for overstepping the established rules of behavior of international civil servants, but I felt that my overriding obligation was to contribute to the achievement of a political solution of the Afghan conflict.

I told Armacost and Oakley that I had gathered in Moscow that the Soviets were facing an extremely difficult situation in Kabul and that they were unable to exercise any moderating influence. "Of course you do not believe me," I said, "but I can assure you that I encounter the same reaction when I tell the Soviets that you are having problems with Pakistan." Oakley admitted that the situation resembled the one that the United States had encountered toward the end in Saigon.

Pakistan's suggestions for immediate action were essentially procedural and therefore fell within the category of those I had identified as potentially counterproductive. Wakil, as far as Dost could tell, was still under medical treatment and was not, in any case, eager to see me, whether in Kabul or in Geneva. The confusion in Kabul had not unraveled, and the situation in Peshawar was becoming increasing tense.

But suddenly a number of developments indicated that I had not wasted my voice. On July 19 Najibullah arrived in Moscow on an unannounced visit. There were reports in the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* that he had said that he was prepared to step down.[20] In an interview with the Indonesian newspaper *Merdeka* Gorbachev said that he supported a short time frame for withdrawal.[21] Vladimir Kolesnikov, who had stayed behind in Moscow, told me upon his return to New York that the Soviets were trying to persuade the Afghans to request the convening of a round of negotiations. Gorbachev withdrew Soviet troops from Mongolia.

Only when the Soviets showed me the Tass version of the *Merdeka* interview did I realize how crucial to the Afghan diplomatic process had been the landing in Red Square of a small plane in which a young German pilot, Mathias Rust, had flown over more than four hundred miles of Soviet territory. As a result of that perplexing event, which took place only one month before my trip to the Soviet Union, Aleksandr Koldunov, commander of the Air Defense Command, was relieved of his post, and the Politburo castigated the defense forces for their "intolerable unconcern and indecision." Marshal Sergey Sokolov, who had not been a conspicuous supporter of Gorbachev, resigned as Minister of Defense and

was replaced by General Dmitry Yazov, who had recently been transferred to Moscow by the Soviet leader. Since Yazov was considered an outsider by the military hierarchy, his unexpected promotion was seen as a rebuff to the military top brass and an indication that Gorbachev intended to exercise his authority in military matters.

VI

Sometime in 1984 I was walking down Second Avenue in New York when a well-dressed man approached me. "Mr. Cordovez," he said, "I am an Afghan and would like to talk to you about my country. Would you allow me to invite you for lunch?" I told him to call my office and that I would be pleased to accept his invitation. He telephoned the following morning and we agreed to meet at Le Perigord, an expensive French restaurant located near the U.N. He told me that he was related to former King Zahir Shah and that he felt that his royal relative should play an essential role in the search for a political solution of the Afghan crisis. Inasmuch as my Afghan friend was, and still is, a staff member of an international organization, I consider that his identity should not be disclosed. I will hereafter refer to him as The Nephew.

I invited The Nephew to dinner in my apartment. He brought me a beautiful humidor box for my cigars and talked at length about the manner in which political events had unfolded in his country since the former King was overthrown in 1973. Afghanistan was a tribal society, he stressed, in which the monarchy had traditionally been a symbol of unity. Zahir Shah was not hated by the vast majority of his people. Afghans, according to The Nephew, widely recognized that the former King had tried to bring to a medieval society a modern constitutional monarchy as well as economic and social change. In the circumstances expected to prevail in his country after the Soviet withdrawal the former King was the only Afghan who could, in The Nephew's opinion, promote a political process acceptable to the majority of the Afghan people. The Nephew felt that I should discuss the matter with the former King and was eager to arrange a meeting in Rome, where Zahir Shah had lived since he left Kabul.

I told The Nephew that at the very beginning of the negotiations I had mentioned to the Soviets that a process of national reconciliation should be an integral component of the negotiated solution of the Afghan conflict. The promotion of such a process was not, however, within my mandate, and I expected that at the proper time the Soviet Union and Pakistan would use their influence to persuade the contending Afghan factions to work out a political deal among themselves.

I pointed out that my involvement in efforts to settle the domestic aspects of the conflict would be deemed to be improper because U.N. officials were institutionally duty-bound to keep away from questions falling within the domestic jurisdiction of member states. A century of international law had erected a shield against such involvement, which was usually described as "interference." All Governments, even at the risk of being accused of hypocrisy and moral ambi-

guity, had an interest in avoiding precedents that could undermine their absolute right to exercise state authority.

Having said that, I stressed that I wanted to keep in touch with him and with other Afghans so as to be able to advise the Soviets and the Pakistanis concerning ways and means to promote national reconciliation. I anticipated that they would move in that direction only if a Soviet withdrawal was perceived as possible and imminent—but we had not as yet reached that stage.

The Nephew contacted me whenever he came to New York and invited me twice to his home in Europe. He told me what the former King and his entourage were thinking and doing, and I kept him informed, albeit in very general terms, of the tribulations of the negotiating process. At one point I spoke to Shustov about a possible role for the former King in the national reconciliation process. He only smiled and said: "So you want to be a kingmaker?" I then realized that the idea not was entirely unacceptable to the Soviets, and my talk with Kozirev early in 1987 indicated that the Soviets were indeed prepared to consider a scheme in which the old man from Rome would be asked to participate in the reconciliation process.

After the February round of negotiations, when the Soviets proposed an eighteen-month time frame for withdrawal, and following my talks with all my interlocutors about a possible scheme to accelerate national reconciliation (in which I mentioned that Zahir Shah could play an indispensable transitional role), there was considerable speculation and debate about the "king option." On April 15 Ahmed Rashid reported in *The Independent* of London that the resistance leaders were split on the issue. The four fundamentalist parties in the seven-party alliance were said to be "vehemently" opposed to Zahir Shah, while the more "moderate" leaders were prepared to support a role for the former King. "The fundamentalists know that a Zahir Shah solution would build up support through the traditional tribal *jirga,* or council, in Afghanistan," wrote Ahmed Rashid. "The fundamentalist *mullahs* have no social standing in the *jirga,* as they have depended on Islamic conviction and foreign aid to build up their parties, rather than the traditional tribal structure." Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani, one of the "moderate" leaders, made a public pronouncement to that effect in May.

The former King had said in an interview with *Der Spiegel* that "any reconciliation can only be realized in the framework of a political solution." "I am ready to serve my country along those lines—without any conditions," he said.[22] He subsequently made similar statements to the BBC that were carefully listened to by resistance and refugee groups in Pakistan. There were rumors that Pakistani, American, and Soviet officials had visited the former King in Rome. Only Armacost confirmed that this was true. He told me that an official of the U.S. Embassy in Rome had called on the former King but that nothing significant had transpired.

On May 20 Gorbachev surprised everybody when he told a correspondent of *L'Unità* of Rome that he would not oppose a move by the Kabul regime to "seek partners [in a coalition] among emigrants, and perhaps in your own country." The message was described by many people as "intriguing," but it was also very

direct. Gorbachev evidently wanted the former King to find it in his own doorstep. A few days later Najibullah made an even more specific reference to Zahir Shah during a meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling party. Christopher Walker, in a dispatch for the *Times* of London dated June 16, wrote that Najibullah's statement had been made "with both the approval and encouragement of his backers in the Kremlin." Walker also reported that there was diplomatic speculation in Moscow that one purpose behind Najibullah's "Soviet-inspired" offer "might be further to widen divisions between the seven main Afghan guerrilla groups." When I was in Moscow I was told that Najibullah's statement had indeed been made under Soviet pressure and that it was the only indication that the Soviets could still exert some influence in Kabul.

I concluded that the time had come for the former King to step forward and galvanize the timid reconciliation efforts that had been set in motion when the Soviets started more resolutely to talk about withdrawal. Therefore, during my stopover in London to visit Lady Young, I telephoned The Nephew to tell him that I was ready to travel to Rome if the necessary arrangements could be made. He was enthusiastic and promised to contact the former King immediately.

On my return to New York I immediately started to make preparations for my trip to Italy. In order to ensure that the Soviets approved my plan I insisted that a senior official, preferably Kozirev, travel from Moscow to Geneva to be briefed on my return from Rome. I asked Giandomenico Picco, whose Italian nationality would dispel any suspicions, to travel in advance in order to ascertain that everything was in order and that the necessary precautions had been taken to ensure the secrecy of my trip.

After an overnight stay in Geneva, where I ascertained that my Soviet contact had already arrived, I left after considerable delay on an Alitalia airliner on Wednesday, July 29. Picco was at the Rome airport with a rented car. We ate a pizza in a small trattoria in the Rome suburb in which my meeting with the former King was to take place. The Nephew had suggested that instead of going to Zahir Shah's villa we meet in the apartment of Major General Abdul Wali Khan, the former King's first cousin and son-in-law. Many Afghans had told me that Wali Khan had always been considered to be the power behind the throne and the King's closest adviser. It was widely held that he had precipitated the 1973 coup and that after the former King had settled in Italy Wali Khan had continued to exercise considerable, yet not always positive, influence on the exiled monarch. I was told that he was often at odds with other members of Zahir Shah's entourage.

The former King was then seventy-two years old. He bore himself with the absolute dignity of one who during forty years had never imagined that he might be other than the ruler of his country. He also showed all the pride and kindness that characterize the Afghans. Entirely without arrogance, he seemed to have a bland and benign temperament. I readily realized that he was a man of contemplation rather than of action, and when we discussed the conflict I concluded that he was much less attuned to the complexities of the situation than his press interviews had indicated.

We spoke in French. I first made a review of the negotiations. He and Wali

Khan sought a number of clarifications, particularly about the attitude of Pakistan. I then stressed that the time had come for some bold moves toward national reconciliation and pointed out that Zahir Shah had to play an historical role in that context. It would be a pity, I added, if he were to delay the steps that so many Afghans expected him to take. It was essential to avoid the impression that he was acting on behalf or at the behest of the Soviets, the United States, or anybody else. The more speculation, rumors, and press interviews, the more that impression could gain strength. I was there essentially to advocate swift action.

I then explained the scheme that my interlocutors had reacted to with what I described as "favorable silence." The scheme would require his active participation, starting with a trip to Peshawar in order to dramatize the wide support that he had in the refugee population.

Zahir Shah seemed very keen to "clarify" that he had resigned in 1973 to prevent a situation that could have brought "lamentable" suffering to his people. There had been no revolution or popular uprising but rather a palace or family coup when he was in Ischia, Italy, for eye treatment and the medicinal mud baths. He had since followed with sadness all the "tragic" events that had taken place in his country. He wanted to help his people bring about a "just and balanced" solution and reinstate Afghanistan's "independence and peace."

The former King felt that the scheme that I had outlined was not at variance with Afghan traditions because it assumed that a solution would be worked out by the Afghans themselves through consultations and negotiations. Those were procedures that Afghans had always used to settle disputes and to resolve conflicts. It seemed, however, that he had envisaged many more stages of consultations and additional negotiations. His trip to Pakistan, for instance, would take place after many emissaries had gone back and forth to Peshawar to ensure that he would be well received. I discerned that he was quite unsure of the reactions that he would get from the various Afghan groups and that he tended to be extremely cautious. Abdul Wali constantly interjected that I should ascertain if Pakistan would issue a visa for the former King's trip. I promised to do so.

I felt obliged to point out, admittedly in very careful terms, that political processes such as the ones that were expected to take place required leadership and boldness. It was essential to take precautions, but if too much time was allowed to elapse in securing assurances of the success of every move, the whole process might be undermined. Certain political developments could not, by their very nature, be endlessly prepared; they should just happen. The scheme that I had suggested included a number of safeguards, but it also took into account the need to proceed expeditiously. Otherwise the Soviet withdrawal might be delayed or even canceled. The former King had publicly accepted an historical responsibility, and I therefore expected that he would reconsider the observations he had made.

Zahir Shah assured me that his remarks had been based upon his knowledge of Afghan idiosyncrasies and his long experience as the ruler of his country. He was, however, eager to serve and would discuss with his advisers ways and means to streamline the consultation mechanisms that he had mentioned. He had rejected Najibullah's invitations to join a coalition sponsored by Kabul

because he felt that national reconciliation should be conducted in a way that would allow all Afghans to act independently. The former King authorized me to tell my interlocutors that he was ready and willing to contribute to the achievement of a political solution and to efforts to "rebuild Islamic democracy" in his country.

I was back in Geneva almost at midnight. The following morning I briefed my Soviet contact, stressing that the former King's caution could be overcome if his and the other Governments concerned moved decisively. I also pointed out that Zahir Shah felt quite comfortable with the idea of a Geneva meeting and had made only a few remarks about participation in the meeting. My Soviet contact, whom I knew as another cautious type, only listened and undertook faithfully to report to his authorities. When the briefing was concluded I felt slightly discouraged, and during a telephone conversation with The Nephew I complained about the former King's extreme caution. He said: "Please remember that he was a young boy when his father was assassinated in front of him."

Upon arrival in New York I agreed with my colleagues that our main problem remained the apparent reluctance or inability of the governments to "move decisively" in the promotion of national reconciliation. I therefore felt that instead of trying to get answers to the ideas that I had spelled out orally, I should confront all concerned with a piece of paper outlining in greater detail the scheme that I had first discussed with Kozirev in February.

The paper that we prepared was entitled "Scenario for an Accelerated Process of National Reconciliation." Its underlying premise was that national reconciliation should be carried out by the Afghans themselves and that, since there was neither a mechanism for intra-Afghan dialogue nor a mutually acceptable format for discussion, the document was intended essentially to facilitate communication with a view to establishing "transitional arrangements to ensure the effective implementation of the comprehensive settlement."

The "Scenario" noted that former King Zahir Shah had pledged his cooperation and envisaged a "mechanism of national reconciliation" that would include representatives of "the seven parties now based in Peshawar, representatives of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, and selected personalities." The format of the discussions would be agreed upon in advance, and the decisions to be reached would be binding upon all the participants. A meeting in Geneva would be convened "to define all the necessary procedural matters and set the mechanism in motion."

According to the "Scenario," the mechanism would operate on the basis of an understanding by all the participants that the transitional arrangements "must be as broadly based as possible" and that, accordingly, the structure of the transitional arrangements and the distribution of specific posts should be discussed and decided upon during the talks. No specific posts would be earmarked for any specific party, "and no party would be assured a predominant role in the transitional arrangements."

The "Scenario" anticipated that the transitional arrangements would, in addition "to running the affairs of State," set in motion any constitutional processes that might be necessary to "ensure continued peaceful conditions in Af-

ghanistan." During the transitional period a Declaration of Neutrality would be formulated and the requirements of a program of international economic and social assistance to Afghanistan would be identified.

Following past practice, I decided to give the "Scenario" to the Soviets first. "Uskorenie, my dear Roland, Uskorenie," I said when Timerbaev came to collect the paper. (I had previously asked Vladimir Kolesnikov to tell me the correct translation of "acceleration.") Timerbaev read the text carefully and then smiled. "I hope," he said, "I hope."

VII

"In Moscow's parlance, the Soviet Union has read the 'Scenario' and you may go ahead," said Timerbaev with obvious satisfaction a couple of weeks later. He was in an upbeat mood, quite convinced that the "gloomy atmosphere" that had prevailed in Moscow for several months was starting to change. Gorbachev had, according to his information, "notified" Najibullah that the Afghans had one year "at most" to sort out their differences before the departure of the Soviet army from Afghanistan. A Soviet colleague in the Secretariat said that Gorbachev had also enjoined the KGB leadership: "You played a role in getting us into Afghanistan; you must now help me get out."

As soon as I received the message from Moscow I told Shanawaz and Dost to inform Yaqub and Wakil that I wished to talk to them "at Geneva or at another location in Europe that they might prefer." (I knew that Geneva was occasionally objectionable because it had the connotation of a formal round of negotiations.) At the same time I made arrangements to meet a number of prestigious members of the Afghan "Diaspora" in order to seek their participation in the process envisaged in the "Scenario." My first meeting was with a distinguished Afghan who was selling hamburgers in Washington and who was accompanied by a young American, Charlie Santos, who became one of my most enthusiastic and able advisers, first in a private capacity and later as a member of my staff.

We also sought the cooperation of several Western European governments to arrange a meeting with the *mujahideen* leaders in Peshawar. The Swedish Government was particularly helpful and forthcoming and suggested extreme caution because the resistance leaders remained deeply divided on most of the issues mentioned in the "Scenario," particularly in connection with a possible role for the former King.

I sent Zahir Shah a message informing him of the Soviet reaction to the "Scenario." The former King sent a reply on the August 10. "He wants you to know," said the intermediary who delivered the message, "that on further reflection, and on the basis of consultations with other Afghans, he has concluded that no mechanism for intra-Afghan talks could be set in motion before agreement is reached on the time frame for withdrawal." The message added that the former King felt that the Afghans he had spoken to considered that starting the negotiations without a time frame could be interpreted as a formal recognition "of the present state of affairs."

Zahir Shah's message reinforced my conviction that no matter what was done to promote a two-track approach toward a settlement, the Soviets would not be able to persuade the United States, Pakistan, and the Afghans—those in Peshawar as well as those in the "Diaspora"—to engage in serious efforts to establish a new government in Kabul before an agreement was reached on the time frame. When I conveyed the former King's message to Timerbaev, he only repeated that Moscow was trying to persuade Kabul to request the convening of a round of negotiations because "the leadership" seemed "to have forgotten the existence of Geneva."

I did not receive any reaction from Yaqub to my suggestion for a meeting. Shahnawaz told me in confidence that Yaqub was about to resign and predicted that he would be replaced by Zain Noorani, a provincial politician who had been for some time a very low-profile (parliamentary) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. I had lunch and then a very long meeting with Noorani when he came to New York at the end of August.

I told Noorani that I had not heard from the Government of Pakistan since my meeting with Prime Minister Junejo and Yaqub in Brussels and that "the world has the impression that both Pakistan and Afghanistan are at a standstill." The ideas that I had outlined to Junejo were acceptable to the Soviet Union but, as usual, they would only "look the other way" or respond with "consenting silence"; they were not prepared to express formal opinions on Afghan internal matters or to discuss the subject with Pakistan. I explained each of the points of the "Scenario" in detail, emphasizing that Junejo had already approved them.

Noorani stressed that Pakistan did not wish to "drag out" the negotiations but that it could proceed only in close consultation with the *mujahideen*. After my meeting with Junejo his Government had tried to get the resistance leaders to accept the scheme, but two of the leaders were fundamentalists strongly opposed to the former King. He felt that "ultimately they would be brought around," but at that juncture the resistance was divided. In his view it was essential to arrange a meeting with the Soviet Union and, on the basis of a clear understanding on procedure and objectives, to persuade the Afghans to hold a Loya Jirga, a wide assembly, which would "invite" the former King to participate in the process toward the formation of an interim government.

I told Noorani that what he proposed was not incompatible with the scheme that I had suggested. The "Scenario" in fact envisaged that the Geneva meeting could approve any kind of follow-up steps, including the convening of a Loya Jirga, the traditional Afghan way of solving crises and adopting decisions. Moreover, a Jirga would, in my view, ensure the legitimacy of the whole process. But somebody should convene the Geneva meeting, and if Pakistan was ruling out the former King, I did not see who could do it. He argued that there were other options, which he did not identify, but assured me that it would not be difficult to persuade the seven resistance leaders to attend the Geneva meeting. A Loya Jirga could be called "within two weeks" after the Geneva meeting.

Noorani repeated time and again that the *mujahideen* would agree to negotiate with the PDPA "in a neutral context." When I asked if Pakistan would allow

Zahir Shah to travel to Pakistan "and let the refugees decide if he should lead the process," he answered that "timing was important." "If the former King were to go now," he added, "the chances of his useful involvement would be lost."

Noorani kept insisting that a meeting with the Soviets was a prerequisite to any participation by Pakistan in efforts toward national reconciliation. He asked me to tell the Soviets "in confidence" that he was authorized to discuss all questions regarding Afghanistan—the implication being that he was already in charge of the foreign ministry—and that he was convinced that a "meeting of minds" would not be difficult. The Soviets had been "foolish" on the time frame for withdrawal because their initial proposal lacked sincerity. When I asked what Pakistan's "bottom line" on that issue was, he replied that he first wanted to know the Soviets' bottom line.

That same afternoon Roshan-Rawaan, the Afghan Chargé d'Affaires, called on me to convey an urgent message from Wakil. Afghanistan had decided to propose the convening of a round of talks "either in late August or early September." I remarked that if Afghanistan was requesting a round of negotiations it was obviously for a reason. "Of course," Roshan-Rawaan responded.

I conveyed to Noorani the Afghan proposal for the convening of a new round of negotiations, and he referred to it as a "ploy," a "trick," and a "gimmick." "To propose on August 26 a round of negotiations at the end of the month is not serious," he said. I told him that the proposal had been made under strong pressure from the Soviet Union and that, if it had been made, we should assume that Kabul had evidently "something to deliver." I also showed him a Reuters news dispatch, dated August 25, that reported that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev had stated that "specific dates for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan will be set at the next round of Geneva talks on ending the Afghan conflict." Noorani was not impressed. He was returning to Islamabad and promised to send me his Government's reply as soon as possible.

That evening, as I was leaving my office, I met in the corridor of the thirty-eighth floor U.S. Ambassador Vernon Walters. I told him the essence of my latest encounters with my interlocutors. "The Russians want to leave, but they want to keep Najib," he said. "It is as if somebody had proposed at the end of World War II that De Gaulle form a coalition with Laval! Keep up the good work."

Shahnawaz called me to say that his Government was willing to hold a round of negotiations from September 7 to 9. These dates were also accepted by Afghanistan. I felt that the convening of a round of negotiations would have a healthy effect in that it would give an impression of movement, after several months of inaction, but that the circumstances were not conducive to any meaningful agreement. It was a time when there was still considerable tension between Washington and Islamabad on the nuclear issue and between Moscow and Kabul on the continuing internecine strife. Neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan seemed eager and ready to hold talks, and the Soviets had not given me any indication of their willingness to formalize the short time frame that Gorbachev had promised in the *Merdeka* interview.

VIII

Before going to Geneva for the snap round of negotiations proposed by the Afghans—which in my office we readily started to describe as "the quickie"—I decided to have a talk with Armacost. I told him that I was not particularly optimistic because I knew that the Soviets had forced the Afghans to request the convening of a round of negotiations essentially to emphasize the need for national reconciliation. *Pravda* had published on August 17 a surprising criticism of Afghan politicians.[23] The Soviets, in my view, were still reluctant to propose a short time frame for withdrawal.

I told Armacost that I was therefore giving special emphasis to the promotion of an intra-Afghan dialogue on the basis of certain understandings, which I had suggested to the Soviets, the Pakistanis, and the Afghans, regarding the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul. I had been warned by an American friend not to give Armacost the text of the "Scenario" but I gave him a comprehensive explanation of the contents. His advisers took detailed notes. After our formal meeting I stayed behind and in private showed him the text of the "Scenario." I said that the paper had been sent to Moscow in July and that the Soviets had authorized me to go ahead. Armacost was obviously impressed. "You have something going here," he said as he read the paper. Pointing with his finger at the sentence that referred to neutrality he added: "We have been trying to get this for a long time."

Before starting the round of negotiations in Geneva, I had to make a speech on behalf of the Secretary General at the opening of a meeting of nongovernmental organizations regarding Palestine. Yaser Arafat, head of the PLO, also spoke and invited me to a reception that evening. A funny episode then took place. I had intended to stay at the reception for only a few minutes because I had invited Wakil and his delegation to dinner. But Arafat was not there. Zuhdi Terzi, the PLO representative at the U.N., seemed extremely upset and disappointed because he had arranged for photographers to take pictures of his boss welcoming the representative of the Secretary General. When I told him that I had to leave in order to receive my guests, he begged me to wait a few more minutes. At that point somebody told me that for security reasons Arafat had entered through the kitchen and was already in the hall. I rushed to shake his hand and to say goodbye. As I was leaving, however, Terzi again asked me to wait because he had been informed that Arafat was on his way to the reception. I told him that I had already said hello to him. "That is his brother," he said. "They look very much alike." Indeed, the chairman of the PLO then arrived, and I was able to fulfill the required protocol formalities.

Dispensing with the customary private meetings with my interlocutors, I held my first formal meeting with Wakil on Monday, September 7. I told him that I had urged Pakistan to respond constructively to Kabul's initiative, which I described as a sign of political will. Wakil was not amused. He argued that in March it had been decided to hold a round of negotiations, which had not taken place because he was ill. I believe that he was trying to tell me that the round of

negotiations should not be considered exceptional in any way and that therefore I should not expect any dramatic results.

Wakil then launched a strong attack against Pakistan and its "transparent hostility" toward the Kabul regime. He took the position that, inasmuch as Kabul had made a proposal on the time frame for withdrawal at the previous round, it was now Pakistan's turn to do so. He "reminded" me that there were other pending issues, particularly the border issue, and I reminded him that at the last round of negotiations he had refused to read, let alone receive, an alternative text on the border issue that I had requested the U.N. Legal Counsel to prepare.

The first two days—that is, the whole of Monday and Tuesday—were spent haggling. Wakil kept saying that he was waiting for a Pakistani proposal, and Yaqub insistently repeated that he had proposed a seven-month time frame at the previous round. We spent several hours trying to determine whether that had been a formal proposal or a mere reaction to Wakil's proposal of eighteen months. We also spent considerable time discussing the manner in which the round of negotiations should end, although at that point the round had not really started. It was all rather ludicrous and childish.

Wakil was undoubtedly in a bad mood because he had been forced by the Soviets to request the convening of the round, and Yaqub was uncomfortable because of the ambiguous situation prevailing at home. He evidently had no clear-cut instructions. Noorani, who had not attended any previous round of negotiations, had become his shadow; in order to have private talks with Yaqub, I had to invite him for walks around the garden.

Yaqub told me that an agreement on the time frame for withdrawal would bring about a "sense of realism." It was necessary, he said, to "set the clock ticking" so as to weaken the opposition of the resistance leaders and thus enable his Government to "break china." He pointed out that in the meantime it was futile, and even counterproductive, to discuss the "Scenario," which I had explained to Noorani in New York. He would be willing to consider a different formulation on the border and indeed on any other question that the Soviets might raise if a deal were worked out on the time frame. At one point Yaqub stopped walking and said that Vorontzov had told Max Kampelman, the U.S. disarmament negotiator, that the Soviet Union was prepared to accept a one-year time frame. "Why don't *you* propose a one-year time frame?" he asked me.

I also walked in the garden with Kozirev. I told him what Vorontzov was reported to have said to Kampelman and asked him how the Soviets would react if I were to make a one-year time frame proposal. "Wakil would take it for consideration in Kabul and Moscow," Kozirev replied. He indicated that he was having difficulties trying to persuade Wakil to make even a token move regarding the time frame. On the other hand, he seemed determined to convince me to discuss the "Scenario" with Wakil. I told him that a member of Wakil's delegation had told a member of my staff that I should not yet raise the matter with Wakil.

On Wednesday, the third day of the talks, which we had all agreed would be the last, Wakil proposed a sixteen-month time frame for withdrawal. I did not

disguise my disappointment. I told Wakil that I was sure that Pakistan would feel that there was no difference between Afghanistan's previous proposal and its latest. Had Pakistan accepted eighteen months in March, I added, only twelve months would remain before the completion of the time frame. Therefore, Kabul was in effect adding four months to its previous offer.

Wakil reacted indignantly. He said that after years of mediation I had not been able to understand the essence of the questions under discussion. "The time frame for withdrawal is not a matter of simple arithmetic," he shouted, "but a sensitive political issue." He regretted that even before conveying the proposal to the other side I was arguing against it. I calmly noted that I knew the positions of the two sides and was trying to make him see the predictable political impact of his proposal.

I told Yaqub that we should try to understand Afghanistan's strategy. It was possible that the proposal was the latest step of gradual approximation. "If this means 'sixteen and moving,' we just have to be patient," I said. It was also possible, in view of the difficulties prevailing in Kabul, that some members of the leadership, including Wakil, wanted to create the impression of total deadlock at Geneva. I reminded him that it would serve many people's purposes if Geneva nearly collapsed. Yaqub agreed that there were a number of rational reasons why the Afghans in Kabul ("And in Peshawar," I interjected) did not wish the Geneva process to flourish. He reluctantly admitted that both the Soviet Union and Pakistan were facing "an Afghan problem."

Once the Pakistanis realized that Wakil was not going to make any spectacular offer regarding the time frame, they decided to take as much political advantage as possible of the fact that Kabul had requested the convening of the round of negotiations. Yaqub said that he was going to call a press conference and claim that the U.N. and Pakistan "had been taken for a ride." I was convinced that he was acting under considerable pressure from his Government, which had been extremely reluctant to go to Geneva. When Yaqub had suggested in private that I should make a twelve-month proposal he was probably trying to face the resistance leaders with a fait accompli. Talking to him and Noorani together, I had concluded that at that stage Pakistan was not ready to contemplate the conclusion of a settlement.

Kozirev told me that it was essential to persuade Pakistan to make a counterproposal. Otherwise, he stressed, it would be very difficult to convince the Afghans to return to Geneva. I then decided to prolong the round of negotiations to a fourth day and invited Yaqub for another walk in the garden. He asked me not to propose the twelve-month time frame. I demanded that he take a "step of approximation" in order to keep the negotiations in motion, even if only in slow motion. Yaqub said that bargaining was most distasteful to him. "Sure," I said.

The following morning both Wakil and Yaqub seemed determined to appear deeply upset, tough, and blunt. Yaqub said that Pakistan did not wish to be instrumental in ending the round of negotiations in a "less than elegant" way and that it would therefore raise its position on the time frame for withdrawal to eight months. He added that Pakistan had agreed to follow the path of "gradual

approximation" and that it expected Kabul to make a new proposal in order to continue the negotiations.

Wakil was very angry and vehemently denied that Afghanistan had initiated the "gradual approximation" approach. I invited Wakil to have a private meeting, but, unlike Dost, he was as tense and rigid in my office as in the formal meetings. "Why don't you outsmart them?" I asked. "Why don't they outsmart us?" he shot back.

Yaqub told a press conference in Geneva that the round of negotiations had been an Afghan "ploy" and a "trick," but subsequently, on his arrival in Islamabad, he sounded conciliatory toward the Soviets. Yaqub said that a settlement was near and that "a little more confidence and skillful diplomacy would get us a timetable that would be meaningful and purposeful. It would inject a sense of realism in the dialogue and also promote the formation of a future interim government." Analysts and commentators were confused, to say the least.[24] *The Muslim* of Islamabad said that all the "stroll diplomacy on the lush, green lawn of the Palais des Nations" had not produced anything significant.[25]

IX

Not too long after the conclusion of the September round of negotiations I realized that it had in fact served a useful purpose. The Soviets, I thought, had only then became fully aware that it was illusory to expect a reasonable process of national reconciliation to start, and the bickering in Kabul among mutinous Afghans to cease, before the conclusion of the settlement. This did not happen overnight, but indications that the Soviets were moving decisively toward a breakthrough were apparent to me from September 18, when Shevardnadze went to Washington for a meeting with Shultz, and became increasingly clear toward the end of the year.

The meeting between Shevardnadze and Shultz did something that I had consistently considered to be a prerequisite to a settlement of the Afghan conflict. It showed that in the consideration of a broad range of East/West issues, including Afghanistan, the superpowers had been able to develop a degree of mutual confidence. "There wasn't any movement on a time schedule, but nevertheless I think it was a very worthwhile discussion from my standpoint," said Shultz when the talks ended.[26]

On September 23 Armacost told me that Shevardnadze had made it clear that the Soviet Union was serious about getting out of Afghanistan and had acknowledged that the situation in Kabul was not ideal. "The United States is now persuaded that there is a genuine wish on the part of the Soviets to withdraw," he added.

I decided that I should continue to prod the Soviets to offer a short time frame for withdrawal and simultaneously press Pakistan to facilitate national reconciliation. I felt that my efforts in pursuance of the "Scenario" would reassure the Soviets that, once agreement was reached on the time frame, there would be concrete movement toward the formation of a broad-based govern-

ment in Afghanistan. The Soviets, when discussing the situation in Kabul, seemed utterly disappointed, even despondent, and therefore increasingly receptive to the idea of concluding a settlement without further delay. Kozirev told me in Geneva that by the end of the year the Afghans would realize that their own approach to national reconciliation had failed. Timerbaev said in New York that his Government was increasingly convinced that a reasonable solution of the internal Afghan conflict could be achieved only through a full implementation of the "Scenario."

During the session of the General Assembly Shevardnadze agreed to meet Yaqub at the Soviet mission. Yaqub told me that the Soviet Foreign Minister had urged that concerted efforts be made to promote a consensus among the Afghans. Yaqub had stressed to Shevardnadze that an agreement on the time frame for withdrawal would act as a catalyst for all Afghans, "yours and mine," to talk to one another and had pointed out that Najibullah was totally unacceptable to the Afghans who had left the country. Shevardnadze had said, in his usual emphatic manner, that "neither you nor us" can do much about such matters but that "other ideas" had emerged that could lead to a solution.

When Yaqub told me this, in a meeting in my office on September 30, I told him that Shevardnadze was undoubtedly referring to the "Scenario" and that it was very difficult for me to understand why Pakistan remained so reluctant to accept it. I reminded him that at Geneva he had even refused to discuss it with me. If anybody should have problems with it, I added, it should be the Soviets. The proof that everybody expected Pakistan to participate in such efforts was that he had been repeatedly interrogated on the subject during his press conference in Geneva. Yaqub avoided giving me a straight answer but took with him a copy of the "Scenario."

Armacost acknowledged that Yaqub was facing an uncomfortable situation. He told me that Pakistan was hesitant to approach the *mujahideen* "before a common platform has been developed." In his opinion, once Pakistan was convinced that the Soviet Union was ready to accept a coalition that was not dominated by the PDPA, it would have considerable leverage with the leaders. Pakistan also wanted to discuss with the Soviets the role of the former King. (I told Armacost that the Afghans with whom I was in touch had said that three of the leaders supported Zahir Shah and that Pakistan could "bring around" two others.) I noted that the Soviets did not trust the Pakistanis to observe confidentiality. That was one of the reasons why, in my view, they had agreed that the "Scenario" should serve as a framework for joint efforts. By their standards of diplomatic discourse, Shevardnadze had been quite clear when he met Yaqub.

Armacost said that when Shevardnadze was in Washington he had endorsed the idea of giving the former King a role and that he, Armacost, had passed on that information to Pakistan. Armacost seemed to share my impatience with the attitude of Islamabad, and we agreed that he and I would try to persuade Vorontsov to visit Pakistan, which was what Yaqub had asked and what the Pakistani press had already announced. (That, I said, was the wrong way of putting pressure on the Soviets!) Armacost and I continued to meet frequently. I

gave him a copy of the "Scenario," which in the oblique style of the superpowers he implied he was prepared to support.

When I discussed the situation with Abdul Sattar, the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, it was obvious that there were in Islamabad widely different perceptions of the approach that the Government should adopt toward the resistance leaders—and indeed toward the broader question of the formation of a new government in Kabul. The foreign ministry, I suspected, was in favor of "breaking china," but Sattar implicitly admitted that that policy was not acceptable to other Government entities.

Sattar was obviously trying to get from me additional arguments to convince President Zia that the "Scenario" provided a sound framework for the resolution of the dilemma facing Pakistan. At one point during the conversation he asked Shanawaz if he considered it possible to convince the Peshawar leaders to talk to members of the PDPA. "They are probably doing so already" was Shanawaz's immediate reply. I felt that Sattar was convinced of the advantages of endorsing the "Scenario" but equally doubtful of the chances that his Government as a whole could be persuaded to do so.

I also had a long meeting with Vladimir Petrovsky, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, whose influence as a U.N. expert had grown since Gorbachev became interested in the organization. I made a comprehensive analysis of the political significance of the settlement of the Afghan conflict in the context of the new foreign policy that the Soviet Union was trying to develop, including an improvement of relations with the United States. I told Petrovsky that his Government's concern about preventing a bloodbath in Kabul was entirely reasonable but that in the circumstances it was not credible. "Perhaps you will believe each other after the Afghan settlement," I said. "That may well be its most lasting significance."

I also decided to meet a number of influential members of the Afghan "Diaspora." Some were working in coffee shops or performing a variety of low-skill jobs. Others were holding professional positions as medical doctors and engineers and were financially well off.

Three Afghans in particular gave me excellent advice. They were Abdul Samad Hamed, a former Minister of Planning, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Tribal Affairs; Abdul Sattar Sirat, a former Minister of Justice; and Abdul Wakil, a former Minister of Agriculture. I met many others whose names I prefer not to mention, including several relatives of the former King. I also established indirect contacts with, among others, Mohammad Yusuf, a former Prime Minister. They all condemned the Soviet invasion and were eager to return to their homeland. They seemed to think that my ideas were sound, but they all said that if the Soviets were to withdraw—they were not prepared to believe that it could happen—everything else would then be easily sorted out.

Abdul Sattar Sirat told me something that impressed me. "Mr. Cordovez," he said, "not all those who are inside are bad, and not all those who are outside are good." It was that phrase that subsequently led me to promote the concept of the "good Muslims," a group of carefully chosen personalities who would be

trusted by all sides to hold office during what the "Scenario" described as the "transitional arrangements." During the session of the General Assembly I briefly met the resistance leaders during a reception offered by the Saudi Ambassador at the Waldorf Astoria. We again agreed to talk, soon, at a mutually convenient place and date.

Press speculation about a possible Soviet withdrawal as well as published reports regarding my consultations with the Afghans had an immediate impact on my mail. I received dozens of letters from Afghans, some with hundreds of signatures, containing statements and proposals on virtually every aspect of the settlement, the withdrawal of Soviet troops, and the establishment of a new government. The Chairman of the Afghan Social Democratic Party (ASDP) raised a number of pertinent questions regarding "the issue of legitimate representation" that I had not fully considered.

The ASDP did not question the importance of the seven resistance leaders who had formed the Islamic Unity of Afghan *mujahideen* (the Afghan Alliance) but rejected their claim to be the only legitimate representatives of the Afghan resistance. It maintained that the "prominence" of the Alliance was an arbitrary foreign imposition and opposed the "dictatorial and ultrareactionary tendencies" of some of its members. The fundamentalists, according to the ASDP, believed that the restoration of an Islamic government would solve all the social ills of Afghanistan. "Their economic thinking is confined to anecdotes from the seventh century," the ASDP added. The statement noted that in 1980 there had been twenty-two different political groups resisting the Soviet occupation and that "international powers" supporting the Afghan resistance had demanded a unified resistance movement enjoying "some degree of legitimacy among the people." The ASDP then said:

> Thus, the Loya Jirga [grand assembly] was convened in Pakistan to address the issue of legitimate representation of the Afghans. The Jirga attracted representatives from various parts of the country and enjoyed the support of many resistance groups. The Jirga, however, projected a nationalist character, and, thus, the fundamentalists rejected its legitimacy. Consequently, the government of Pakistan prevented the continuation of the Jirga's activities and, instead, imposed its own solution to the issue of representation of the Afghans. It recognized the five fundamentalists groups, who had developed close relations with the government of Pakistan in the 1970s, and two newly created nonfundamentalist groups (the National Islamic Front, and the National Liberation Front led by Mr. Gailani and Prof. Mujaddedi, respectively) who were supposed to fill the political vacuum left by the forced absence of established centrist-modernist-nationalist groups such as the ASDP.
>
> This development made it extremely difficult for other Afghan resistance groups to attract any military or financial support. Consequently, they could not compete with the seven groups and, thus, were arbitrarily forced to either merge with one of the seven groups or practically abandon the struggle for the liberation of Afghanistan.

The ASDP concluded by stressing that in addition to the seven Alliance leaders there were "other prominent Afghan politicians and major political

groups that enjoy significant support among the Afghans." The "Scenario," I thought, was intended to bring those groups into the political process.

The Secretary General's report on Afghanistan covering developments in 1987 underlined that the time had clearly come for the Afghans themselves "to take the steps required of them in the peace process." The report noted that the Afghans had become manifestly concerned about the need to reaffirm their right of self-determination—"which is one of the principal objectives of the settlement"—but that they had failed to work out widely acceptable mechanisms for dialogue and decision making. The report emphasized "the role that all the Governments in a position to do so should play in broadening the opportunities for the Afghan people to chart their own destiny."[27]

Shanawaz and, to a lesser extent, Yaqub were disturbed when they read such an obvious reference to Pakistan's reluctance to facilitate Afghan national reconciliation. They made every effort to persuade me that there was a serious problem back home and that it would not be easily solved. The impression that the Government of Pakistan could dictate what the resistance leaders should say and do was, according to them, entirely unjustified, and they once again asked me to urge Vorontsov to visit Pakistan for detailed discussions of specific ways "in which we would be able to help each other."

The prospects of convincing Vorontsov to travel to Islamabad were not enhanced, however, by Pakistan's attitude when the Soviets tried to introduce changes in the resolution of the Assembly that year in order, as they said, that it be adopted by consensus. The amendments would have introduced a reference to noninterference that earlier resolutions had never contained. I suspect that part of the reason why Pakistan was so adamantly opposed was that the Indian Ambassador became unduly active in seeking support for the Soviet proposals. Kozirev came from time to time to my office to inform me of his efforts and frustrations. Shanawaz told me that it was essential "to keep the pressure."

The whole affair had a bitter end because the Soviets asked two friendly governments to suggest two short amendments, at which point Pakistan proposed two subamendments that had the effect of entirely frustrating the meaning and purpose of the Soviet-inspired changes. The resolution, with the original text that had been adopted over the years, was then approved, for the ninth time, this time by 123 votes to 19, with 11 abstentions. Shanawaz was euphoric when his vote-getting machine achieved its biggest triumph ever.[28]

At the time the resolution was being voted on in the great hall of the General Assembly, a large number of Afghans and Americans marched down First Avenue holding an enormous banner that read CORDOVEZ SHOULD NOT IGNORE AFGHAN SELF-DETERMINATION. They conducted a demonstration in front of the U.N. under the watchful eye of the New York Police Department. It was presumably the first time that a U.N. official had been accorded such distinction.

Before his return to Moscow, Kozirev and I had a crucial conversation. He told me that some people in his Government would use the "Assembly episode" to prove that the efforts that the Soviet Union was making to reach a political solution of the Afghan conflict were futile. In their opinion, he said, the United

States and Pakistan were determined to obstruct Soviet steps to reach a settlement because they still wanted to keep the Soviets tied down in Afghanistan.

Kozirev noted that there had been some progress in Kabul. Concrete measures had been approved, for instance, to institute a multiparty system, including the allocation of a large number of government posts to the opposition. Najibullah consistently named the resistance leaders in his speeches and appeals. The opposition would be allowed to open offices and to publish newspapers. Arrangements were being made to convene a Loya Jirga to change the name of the country, to name a head of state (the post had been vacant since Karmal's "resignation"), and to adopt a new constitution.

My only comment was that if Najibullah was appointed President, my "Diaspora" friends, the Pakistanis, and the Americans would say that all the talk about change and political solutions was not serious. It would be much wiser to leave the post vacant. Kozirev seemed to agree but argued once again that I consistently underestimated the difficulties that the Soviets were having with the leadership in Kabul.

I told Kozirev that it was good to know that certain steps were being taken but that he knew as well as I did that national reconciliation had exacerbated endemic PDPA factional disputes, that the resistance alliance was constantly shaken by internecine divisions, and that the Afghan "Diaspora" was unable to take initiatives. I did not see at that stage any reasonable possibility of setting up soon any mechanisms for intra-Afghan dialogue. "Let us be frank, Nikolai," I said. "If we wait until these people get organized we will never have a settlement. All my consultations with Afghans suggest that they will only start doing something if you take your troops out of their country."

Kozirev gave me to understand that Moscow had reached similar conclusions. He did not say anything; he simply nodded vigorous approval as I spoke. I assured him that I would pursue my consultations on the "Scenario," including a second meeting with the former King. I then added very pointedly that I did expect that Vorontsov would tell Armacost, at a meeting that they were scheduled to hold in Geneva in mid-November, that the Soviet Union would no longer condition an agreement on the time frame upon the formation of a coalition government in Kabul. Again he did not say anything, but his reaction was such that I felt altogether confident when I subsequently told Armacost that he would receive "good news" from Vorontsov at Geneva.

I told Kozirev that I intended to make a trip to Islamabad and Kabul in order to ensure that the next round of negotiations would be the last. He wholeheartedly approved my plans. I also asked him to tell Vorontsov on my behalf to consider a short visit to Islamabad. When we parted I think that we both realized, perhaps for the first time, that we were near a threshold.

As soon as he returned from his November 16 meeting with Vorontsov in Geneva, Armacost told me matter of factly, but with a trace of elation, that it had been possible to solve "the linkage problem." Vorontsov had said that the next round of negotiations should take place not later than February 1988—and should be the last. Vorontsov had also said, presumably in response to Armacost's prodding, that Zahir Shah should have a role to play "in the formation of

an interim government." Vorontsov had likewise agreed that Afghanistan should be neutral along the lines of the Austrian State Treaty.

Armacost's only concern was that Vorontsov had not given him a hint of the time frame that the Soviets had in mind. (Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, had said in Munich that it might be seven to twelve months.) "Let me hear it first," I said.

Timerbaev's information about the meeting was practically identical. He added that Vorontsov wanted me to know (presumably in answer to the message that I asked Kozirev to convey) that it was not possible for him to go to Pakistan because President Zia and others in his Government had become "the leaders of an anti-Soviet campaign." Vorontsov had asked him to tell me that "we must together take the Geneva process to the finish line."

A couple of days later Timerbaev came back with another message from Vorontsov. He invited me to visit Moscow immediately after the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, which was scheduled for the beginning of December, and before my trip to Islamabad and Kabul. I was unsure if that meant that there would be major developments at the summit. I wrote to my interlocutors informing them that instead of traveling to Islamabad and Kabul in December I would do so in January 1988. Timerbaev and I agreed that it looked as if we would have the final round of negotiations in February.

As we moved toward what appeared to be the concluding stages of the negotiations, the most unfortunate change of characters took place. Following his failed attempt to be elected Director General of UNESCO, Yaqub had been the subject of scathing criticism in Pakistan. The Sahabzada Yaqub Khan then submitted his resignation as Foreign Minister. As soon as I received the news I sent Yaqub a personal message in which I said in part: "Your decision to relinquish your post . . . which you held with such distinction, is a great loss to the diplomatic process in which we labored together, and to me personally. Your contribution to that process was crucial in enabling it to advance to the stage it has reached."

12

CLIMAX AND ANTICLIMAX: THE GENEVA ACCORDS

Diego Cordovez

- *The Washington Summit (December 1987)*
- *Shevardnadze delivers the message in Kabul*
- *In Islamabad (February 1988) I act as a mediator between the President and his Prime Minister*
- *In Kabul a shattering statement by Zia*
- *The exasperating arrangements to meet the Mujahideen*
- *Four flights over the mountains and a breakthrough*
- *Gorbachev makes "the" announcement*
- *"Geneva Last" (seven weeks in March and April 1988)*
- *"Sam" and "Ivan" reach an understanding on symmetry*
- *Shevardnadze goes to Kabul and Gorbachev meets Najibullah in Tashkent*
- *After six years of negotiations a settlement is reached. "History has been made today," says Secretary of State Shultz*

I

Determined as Gorbachev was to bring about significant changes in Soviet-American relations, the Washington summit was undoubtedly his finest hour. The *New York Times* said that almost up to the time of his departure, on December 9, Gorbachev "continued his remarkable campaign to sell himself, his policies and his country to the American people."[1] "It was like the coming of the

second Messiah, or something," said an astonished Washingtonian when Gorbachev leaped from his car on Connecticut Avenue to shake hands with bystanders. "The man is a genius," gushed a thrilled young girl on the evening news. "It will be remembered," *Time* magazine concluded, "as the summit at which intimacy and symbolism overshadowed disputes about substance."[2]

The summit was still dominated, of course, by the old Cold War agenda; the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of the Communist system were to take place later. But other than the signing of the INF treaty (on intermediate-range nuclear missiles), there was no visible progress on any of the key issues that divided the United States and the Soviet Union at the time. In particular, there was no movement on regional conflicts. "Summit's Glow Fails to Still Fighting in Afghanistan," said the *Independent* of London on December 11. "Breakthrough on Afghanistan Eludes the Summit," echoed The *Guardian.* U.S. officials were quoted as saying that in private meetings Gorbachev was much tougher than the charming image he offered to the public. "What you have gained is a guy you can talk to," said a Reagan aide to *Time,* "but when it comes to substantive changes, forget it."[3]

Gorbachev completed his virtuoso performance in Washington with a farewell press conference at the Soviet Union's new Mount Alto embassy complex at which he delivered a detailed seventy-minute monologue summing up his talks with President Reagan. Gorbachev sounded optimistic when referring to disarmament, but there was a sense of frustration in what he said about regional conflicts. He had traveled to Washington, he said, to resolve a number of conflicts through political means, "but I cannot say that we have made much headway." Confrontation between the superpowers "that have immense weight in international affairs," he pointed out, had "yielded nothing but harm." "I asked President Reagan," Gorbachev added, "if our Governments are not lagging behind the peoples who are anxious for peace."

Referring to Afghanistan, Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union had accepted that a negotiated settlement, in accordance with the "Cordovez scheme," should be actively pursued. "We do not seek an outcome under which there will be a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul," he stressed. The only outstanding issue, he added, was the withdrawal time frame, and the Soviet Government had taken the political decision to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan "in twelve months, maybe less." The proposal did not make much impression because Najibullah had leaked it during a Loya Jirga held in Kabul on November 30, at which a new "Islamiced" constitution was put into effect and Najibullah was appointed as President. Najibullah had said "twelve months" but, unlike Gorbachev, had not said "maybe less." Gorbachev obviously felt that at the summit he had to add something fresh to the proposal.

John Wallach, of Hearst Newspapers, asked Gorbachev to say if he supported the scenario that I had proposed, in which "the *mujahideen,* the PDPA, and some Afghan elders, including the former King," would form a transitional government. Gorbachev sidestepped the question. The new Afghan government, he said, was something "that concerns only the Afghans," but the Soviet Union would try "to be helpful."[4]

Armacost briefed me on December 11 on the summit discussions regarding Afghanistan. Although the talks had not moved far in substance, he said, "it was unrealistic to have expected more." (He was referring to press speculation before the summit that Gorbachev would indicate the precise date on which the withdrawal would start.) Armacost pointed out that after the initial exchanges the U.S. side had feared that the Soviets had "retrogressed" by linking withdrawal and national reconciliation but that in subsequent discussions the Soviets had reaffirmed their intention to withdraw while expressing the hope that national reconciliation would proceed in parallel.

According to Armacost the Afghan conflict was only briefly discussed by Reagan and Gorbachev. Gorbachev had reaffirmed that the Soviets felt "comfortable" with the idea of Afghan neutrality and had referred to arrangements to guarantee it. In a working group headed by Richard Solomon, the Policy Planning Director of the State Department, and by Aleksandr Bessmertnyhk, then a deputy foreign minister of the Soviet Union, the Soviets had undertaken not to engage in any military activity, other than self-defense, during the process of withdrawal. That had added a note of sincerity and determination to Soviet assurances of their intention to withdraw. Armacost gave me the impression that the main concern of the United States was to obtain at the negotiating table firm and formal confirmation of the Soviet expressions of goodwill. He pointed out that, once withdrawal began, it would be in the Soviets' interest to "make a hasty departure" and urged me to persuade Moscow to complete the withdrawal of their troops at the end of 1988. "That would provide the maximum incentive to ratify the INF Treaty and to discuss START [strategic arms reduction talks]," he said.

I was not able to engage Armacost in any discussion about national reconciliation. He knew that I had paid a second visit to the former King because on December 5 the *Washington Post* had published a report by David Ottaway according to which I was having "secret meetings" in Geneva with the Afghans and the Pakistanis "in a bid to break the deadlock on a withdrawal timetable." Armacost decided to call my office in New York, and Cathy informed him that I was in Rome. I told Armacost that Zahir Shah seemed much more determined to act swiftly. Armacost nodded approvingly and repeated once again that "the crucial thing was to push for a resolution of the time frame issue."

My talks with the former King and with other Afghans in Geneva and elsewhere were predictably disclosed by several newspapers. The *New York Times* said on December 11 that I had "opened negotiations with the exiled King of Afghanistan and guerrilla leaders on a transitional government to take power if the Soviet Union withdraws its forces." The *Guardian* of London reported on December 12 that I was "trying to persuade the king and other exiled leaders to form a government of reconciliation." The *Washington Post* said in an editorial on December 13: "Diego Cordovez, the United Nations' mediator, is hunting for a political way out. Maybe he will find one. It remains to be shown, however, that Mr. Gorbachev has any option that does not proceed from Mr. Reagan's promise to play a helpful role if the Soviets will but *get out.*"

The former King and the other Afghans had led me to believe that, if there was an agreement on the withdrawal time frame, a process of reconciliation would follow. I had not talked as yet with the resistance leaders, some of whom were sending increasingly positive signals, but there were concrete indications that Islamabad and Washington would exert the necessary pressures on the Peshawar leaders just as soon as a settlement was concluded.

This was not a mere illusion. In an exclusive interview with Gordon Brook-Shepard of the *Sunday Telegraph,* published on November 29, President Zia, referring to a possible interim government, had said: "Why not have one third representing the Afghan freedom fighters, one third the Afghan refugee movements and, yes, as we shall have to give something to those chaps on the spot, one third to the present Communist regime?" Zia also told Philip Revzin of *The Wall Street Journal* on December 1 that the Soviets would not withdraw unless they were assured "that their friends in Afghanistan won't be massacred, and that requires accommodation." "The three main components—the freedom fighters, the refugees and the present party in power—should form the government," he added. Under the title "Afghan Guerrillas May Be Pressed to Share Power," David Shipler, in the *New York Times* of November 12, quoted a State Department official as saying: "You can't have this issue [the interim government] resolved without some role for the PDPA."

My main concern at that point was that relations between the United States and Pakistan continued to go through an unusually chilly spell. Washington had evidently failed to find a way of sending money and guns to Pakistan without violating its own legislation on nuclear nonproliferation. As relations between the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to improve, and as the prospects for an Afghan settlement seemed to increase, Islamabad became anxious and restless, particularly when it realized that Washington felt that Pakistan's usefulness as an entrepot for rebel arms, and as a bulwark against any further Soviet advance, was likely to diminish. A number of lethal bomb explosions that had rocked Pakistani cities had done much to persuade ordinary citizens that support of the Afghan guerrillas was not in the country's best interest.

At the same time, the diversion to Iran of Stinger antiaircraft missiles provided by the United States to the *mujahideen* had raised doubts in Washington about its ability to exert influence on the Afghan resistance. The United States was also concerned about indications that the Soviet Union was attempting to improve relations with Pakistan. "Russia and Pakistan are having an affair," said the *Economist* on November 28, when the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad hinted that Pakistan might receive $4 billion in aid, "which by funny coincidence is the amount being held up in America."

After the summit there were reports that a formula had been found in Congress in order to approve the pending aid package to Pakistan, and Armacost told me that he intended to travel to Islamabad for discussions on all the issues affecting bilateral relations between the two countries. All in all, the summit had been much more helpful to the Geneva negotiations than public statements had suggested. In my view the two superpowers had reached the conclusion that a settlement involving the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan was

the single event that could consolidate the process of accommodation and thus mark the beginning of an entirely different relationship. "I think we trust each other more," Gorbachev had said at a joint press conference with Reagan before his departure. That was probably quite true, if only because the remark went undisputed by Reagan, but as Armacost had noted, movement towards far-reaching disarmament agreements such as START could take place only if the occupation of Afghanistan was brought to an end.

In this connection unprecedented Soviet testimony is now available. (Its publication was entirely inconsistent with past Soviet practices and disproved literary critics who maintained that anything could be written about negotiations with the Soviet Union because Soviet diplomats do not write memoirs. *Glasnost* had changed that too!) Eduard Shevardnadze wrote in a book, *The Future Belongs to Freedom,* that he felt at the time that only a Soviet withdrawal would make Soviet foreign policy credible. The Afghan conflict, he said, was an "incredibly difficult problem" and that, had it not been resolved, *"perestroika* would have lost heavily." Soviet involvement in the "fratricidal Afghan war," according to Shevardnadze, "was perceived by the majority of countries of the world as an effort to exploit regional conflicts to expand our sphere of influence." The presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, he added, "sowed doubt as to the sincerity of our desire to conduct international affairs in a new way."

In his book Shevardnadze then expressed the conviction that the "civilized world began to trust us" only after the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The withdrawal, he said, "opened up great prospects for putting into practice the principles of the new thinking." "Perhaps it was the experience of the Afghan epic that prompted us to think of the possibility of partnership and cooperation with the West," he concluded.[5]

As a convergence of attitudes that could bring about an Afghan settlement became increasingly apparent, a number of volunteer mediators predictably emerged. Toward the end of 1987 the *New York Times* and the *Times* of London disclosed that Dr. Armand Hammer had embarked on "a remarkable one-man odyssey" to negotiate an Afghan agreement, which involved secret shuttling in his private jet between Moscow, Kabul, Islamabad, Peking, Rome, and Washington. Dr. Hammer seemed to think that I had given him a broad diplomatic assignment. Stephen Milligan of the *Times* said: "Hammer's mission started last February when Diego Cordovez, the U.N. special negotiator, flew to Los Angeles to seek the billionaire's help. He told Hammer that he could be of help because he was 'a friend of all the parties'."[6]

Around that time I was asked by the French Ambassador to the U.N., Pierre-Louis Blanc, to have lunch with Senator Jean-François Deniau, who gave me a detailed account of his extensive contacts with the resistance leaders. He was also trying to work out a deal in connection with the formation of a new government. We subsequently met again in Islamabad, where he was pursuing his mission. His activities, not unlike those of Dr. Hammer, created occasional confusion in certain quarters but on the whole proved useful because they gave a sense of urgency to skeptical and apathetic Afghans.

Indications that a settlement might be possible also intensified opposition in

many quarters. "Conservatives Worry US Will Give Away Store in Afghanistan" was the title of an article that the *Christian Science Monitor* published on December 21. The article reported that Senator Gordon Humphrey, "a longtime champion of the Afghan resistance," had charged that the administration was not applying enough pressure on Moscow to withdraw its troops. "Calling for a 'manly' policy in the face of genocide, Humphrey said he felt betrayed by the 'gap between the rhetoric and the practice' of the administration on Afghanistan." According to the *Monitor,* the Senator's remarks, at a Heritage Foundation roundtable discussion, seemed to reflect the more general souring of some conservatives on President Reagan's approach to the Soviets since the conclusion of the INF agreement. Conservative participants in the discussion had argued that what was needed was additional pressure on the Soviets through military aid to the resistance.

Reading such reports, I concluded that in my forthcoming discussions in Moscow I should emphasize the need for a shorter time frame in order to enable the U.S. Administration to overcome congressional opposition. Even before I left I started to talk to my Soviet interlocutors about a "single-digit time frame," which meant reducing the latest Soviet proposal by at least three months. Armacost told me that it was equally necessary to ensure that the settlement stipulate a significant element of "front loading" in the sense that a large percentage of troops should leave in the initial stages of the withdrawal process.

Another emerging issue had to do with the assistance that the Soviet Union provided to the Kabul regime. Armacost told me that inasmuch as the United States would be required, under the terms of the settlement, to discontinue all supplies of arms to the resistance, it expected the Soviet Union to likewise cease to provide military assistance to Kabul when the settlement entered into force. Otherwise, he said, there would be an unacceptable absence of "symmetry" in the obligations arising from the settlement. I was assured that Washington expected to reach an agreement on that question with Moscow through bilateral discussions. Shultz told me later that when he raised the question for the first time Shevardnadze had said that upon the conclusion of the settlement the Soviet Union would send "food, not arms" to Kabul but that when he, Shultz, had asked a note-taker to record that statement, Shevardnadze had objected, arguing that a formal commitment to discontinue assistance to Afghanistan would violate long-standing legal obligations.

II

Vladimir Kolesnikov and Felix Downes-Thomas, a member of my staff, accompanied me on my journey to Moscow. At Zurich airport, Kolesnikov, assuming the inquisitor role, carried out a mock interrogation during which he asked me all the possible, as well as some improbable, questions that I might face. When we landed in Moscow we were greeted by Nikolai Kozirev and the usual retinue of protocol officials.

The following morning I held my first meeting with Yuli Vorontsov. I told

him that only a few hours before my departure I had watched ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley" and had listened to General Colin Powell, then the President's National Security Adviser, say that the Soviets had taken the political decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. "I gladly and officially confirm that statement," said Vorontsov. He added that it was essential to move swiftly and that I had been invited to Moscow in order to have an exchange of views on all the details of the forthcoming round of negotiations, which in the opinion of the Soviet Government should be the last.

Vorontsov was encouraged by a report that he had received of a meeting of the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad with Muhammed Khan Junejo, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Junejo had started to assert himself and had decided to take over the foreign affairs portfolio following what was generally seen as the forced resignation of Yaqub. Junejo seemed inclined to cooperate with the Soviet Union and had made public pronouncements supporting an early Afghan settlement.

At that point the Soviets seemed interested in exploring the possibility of a two-stage procedure for the conclusion of the settlement. The legal instruments making up the settlement could first be initialed, they told me; after national reconciliation had moved forward to an agreed-upon stage, the formal signing would take place. Vorontsov also mentioned again the danger of a bloodbath after the withdrawal and wanted to know the modalities for the establishment of a U.N. peacekeeping force. I told him that the suggestion of initialing the documents would be interpreted as a renewed attempt by the Soviet Union to link the withdrawal of its troops to national reconciliation. I explained U.N. procedures and practices for the setting up of a peacekeeping force and stressed that governments were usually reluctant to contribute troops unless a cease-fire had been declared.

We then discussed the manner in which I envisaged that the settlement should be concluded, and he asked me to go over the various points with Kozirev and the staff who were responsible for the negotiations. He did not react negatively when I mentioned my "single-digit" formula for the time frame for withdrawal. Vorontsov seemed to be concentrating his attention on national reconciliation with the evident intention of setting in motion, immediately after the conclusion of the settlement, a process of intensive negotiations regarding the formation of a coalition government. We agreed to meet again after my meetings with Shevardnadze and the Geneva team. He then hosted a lunch in my honor which he described as an advance celebration of the forthcoming agreement.

Shevardnadze's first words stressed the constructive spirit that had prevailed at the summit. Gorbachev had made it unmistakably clear that the Soviet Union was determined to withdraw its troops as soon as possible. I said doubts remained in certain quarters but that these could be readily dispelled if the Soviet Union accepted a time frame for withdrawal that was shorter than that envisaged in its latest proposal. Shevardnadze replied that what I suggested was not excluded.

He then raised the question of Iran's participation in the settlement. The

Soviet Union, he said, had not been successful in its efforts to discuss Afghanistan with the Iranian Government. I repeated that Iran had formally taken the position that it would support any settlement that prescribed a Soviet withdrawal. I was convinced, I said, that even if they refused to sign a document, the Iranians would honor all the provisions of the settlement. They had not raised any objections to the draft settlement as it stood, and during my stay in Teheran the Iranian Government had even agreed to facilitate contacts with the *mujahideen* who lived in Iran.

When I referred to "front loading" in the context of the withdrawal arrangements, he showed a slight impatience and asked me to ensure that the United States and Pakistan would not introduce new and unnecessary complications. Shevardnadze said that Junejo had mentioned to the Soviet Ambassador in Pakistan that half of the troops should leave in one fourth of the time frame. "It is not for Pakistan to deal with that kind of question," he added. "The Soviet Union would withdraw its forces in accordance with an agreed time frame and might leave even earlier, but Pakistan had no right to issue ultimatums to the Soviet Union." Shevardnadze underlined time and again that the Soviet Union wanted the U.N. to "certify" that the withdrawal was being carried out in good faith.

Shevardnadze said that Najibullah would explain to me his "new" ideas concerning former King Zahir Shah "and his entourage" in the context of national reconciliation. It was a pity, he added, that Pakistan did not take Najibullah and his policies seriously. But that was "a problem for the future" and for the Afghans themselves to solve. "They will eventually find a common language," he added.

Before ending the conversation Shevardnadze asked my confidential advice as to whether Vorontsov should visit Islamabad. I said that he should definitely go. In Pakistan Vorontsov's trip to Islamabad had become, I said, a matter of principle and of pride and would be seen as the beginning of a new relationship that would undoubtedly follow the conclusion of the settlement.

Vladimir Kolesnikov was distraught because that evening we were forced to attend again a Bolshoi performance of *Giselle*. It had been our ballet program during our previous trip, which had proved rather less successful. In line with the more joyous mood then prevalent, Vladimir suggested that the following day we go to the circus. We had a wonderful time.

The discussion with Kozirev and his staff was businesslike and thorough. I first recalled that Islamabad's latest proposal regarding the withdrawal time frame had been eight months and that the latest Soviet proposal had been twelve months. Could we not agree that the gap should be, for negotiating purposes, "evenly bridged" and that therefore the Soviet Union could propose ten months at the next round? I did not hide my intention to promote on that basis, in the course of further negotiations, an agreement on a single-digit time frame. Kozirev said that he expected that his authorities would accept my suggestion but that consultations would have to be conducted with Kabul.

When I mentioned "front loading," in the context of the withdrawal modalities, Kozirev said that the question fell "under the rubric of military details"

and that he was neither capable of discussing nor authorized to discuss such questions. It was, in his view, an "external issue" that ought not to be included in any settlement document. If new issues were raised by Pakistan or the United States. he bluntly added, the chances of concluding the settlement at the next round of negotiations might be undermined.

Kozirev also asked me about the possibility of establishing a U.N. peace-keeping force to prevent a bloody convulsion after the withdrawal of Soviet forces. I told Kozirev that in all frankness it would be very difficult to secure the cooperation of governments to ensure stable conditions for the survival of the Najibullah regime. When the question of the participation of Iran was raised I repeated what I had said many times: that it would be a mistake to give Iran the impression that it had the power to veto the settlement. Kozirev replied that I should be prepared for a very formal, and perhaps inflexible, presentation of the subject by Wakil at Geneva.

I had by then concluded that some of the points that were being raised, such as the initialing suggestion, peace keeping, and the "Iranian factor," constituted exclusively Kabul's concerns, which the Soviets felt obliged to convey to me as part of what I was starting to describe as "the choreography of the settlement." It consisted of a number of last-minute adjustments and accommodations that had to be made in the Moscow-Kabul and in the Washington-Islamabad relationships in order to secure the support of certain quarters and personalities.

In connection with national reconciliation, Kozirev recalled with undisguised anger all the "wicked and diabolic intentions" that Pakistan had attributed to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, he emphasized, were not interested in imposing any kind of government in Kabul and were more than willing to accept any regime that the Afghans wished to have. "Tell me frankly," he asked, "is there a way to convince the Pakistanis to cooperate in the formation of a government freely chosen by the Afghans?"

I told Kozirev that my staff had started to develop a list of "good Muslims," a group of honest and neutral individuals who were sincerely willing to work out the conditions required to enable Afghanistan to regain peace and stability. The ideas that he and I had discussed walking in the garden of the Palais des Nations were still valid, and there had been a number of positive changes in the objective circumstances surrounding national reconciliation. To start with, the resistance leaders were no longer perceived as the representatives of all the Afghans living abroad, and negotiations with the PDPA were no longer ruled out by Pakistan. Zia had made a number of very positive press statements, and Secretary of State Shultz had lectured Mowlavi Yunis Khalis, the chairman of the resistance alliance, on the need for negotiations with the Afghan ruling party.

I had two further brief meetings with Vorontsov and Shevardnadze, mainly to wind up the discussions and to exchange expressions of good wishes for the New Year. They had been informed of my meeting with Kozirev and the staff and seemed to approve all our conclusions. Vorontsov agreed that consultations with Afghans should be intensified: "Royals and plebeians should be encouraged to participate," he said, and he promised to visit Islamabad either just before or just after my trip to the region.

On the way back from Moscow we spent what I described in my notes as a "night of horrors." The plane was delayed because of bad weather, and when we landed in Frankfurt we were told that we had missed the connecting flight to Geneva, where I was scheduled to meet some of my Afghan friends. Vladimir and Felix were then arrested because they did not have German visas. An airline representative and I had to arrange for their release from captivity. That took about an hour. Vladimir then realized that his briefcase had disappeared. We suspected a plot to steal the secrets of a Soviet diplomat and filed a formal complaint in yet another office. We were told that we had neither a hotel in which to spend the night nor plane reservations for the following morning. By then we had spent more than two hours at the airport.

A hotel was eventually located, and we were driven to it in an airline van. Upon arrival we were issued several vouchers, each with several signatures all of which were required to certify the authenticity of the document. I told the reception attendant that I intended to have breakfast in my room. She said that the voucher did not cover the costs of room service. I said that I would gladly pay any additional charges. She said that that would complicate the accounting and that I should therefore have breakfast in the dining room. I refused and asked her to forget about the breakfast voucher. She said that that was not possible either because she had to report to the airline that the voucher had been used in the dining room. I said that she could tell the airline that the passenger belonged to a strange Latin American religious sect that did not allow members to have breakfast or, better still, that the passenger had died in his sleep and had, therefore, been unable to use the voucher. She rejected the idea and I refused to go to my room. Felix then went to conduct negotiations about the breakfast voucher, thereafter referred to as the Frankfurt negotiations, with the hotel manager. He came back several times to report that progress was being made but that there was no breakthrough. During one of the intermissions in the diplomatic process we were told that Vladimir's briefcase had been found. Eventually Felix came back victorious and boastful. A comprehensive settlement had been reached and the "Frankfurt Act of International Reconciliation" had been signed. I would be able to use the voucher and have breakfast in my room. We celebrated Felix's success in the hotel restaurant, within the limits of our dinner vouchers.

I have said before that a mediator will consistently face accusations of partiality and encounter all kinds of misunderstandings. Ironically, at a time when I was applying enormous pressure on the Soviets and the Afghans to propose a short time frame for withdrawal, the Pakistanis were accusing me of unfairly pressing them to facilitate the efforts to organize a new Afghan government. My meetings with the former King and with the Diaspora Afghans had also been criticized. I let Islamabad know that I took exception to such accusations, which I considered wholly unjustified. When I came back from Moscow I was therefore gratified to know that the Government of Pakistan had made some glowing public statements about my role in the negotiations. "Pakistan Foreign Office Today Expressed Complete Confidence in the Efforts of Diego Cordovez," said *The Muslim* on December 17. "Cordovez's Role Most Commendable" was the

Pakistan Times's comment. "Pakistan to Supplement Cordovez Efforts for Geneva Accord," added the *Frontier Post* of Peshawar.

The Soviet Union had never appeared so determined. Soviet-American relations had undergone a drastic improvement, and some of the changes of attitude, perception, and posture that were required to make the next round of negotiations the last were gradually taking place. Besides, *Time* named Gorbachev as the Man of the Year. It was a good time for a rest in Florida.

III

At the beginning of 1988, the "choreography of the settlement" was undoubtedly in full swing. Armacost flew to Islamabad, and Shevardnadze decided to pay another "working visit" to Najibullah. But in the weeks ahead the divisions among the Peshawar leaders and the obduracy of the Afghan party leadership were severely to test the will of the superpowers.

On January 13 I met for about two hours with Armacost in my office. He told me that Islamabad was preparing for my forthcoming visit and for the next round of talks "in a serious frame of mind." However, after a careful rereading of the settlement instruments, Pakistan had decided that, in addition to a short time frame for withdrawal, specific provisions concerning the front loading, as well as the "phasing" of the withdrawal would be required. Only thus would it be possible to achieve a prompt and irreversible withdrawal and to monitor its implementation. Armacost also said that he was satisfied that Pakistan was interested in promoting an interim government in Kabul and in working with the resistance leaders to encourage an intra-Afghan dialogue. He himself had met with some of the leaders and with representatives of all the others.

I gathered that the new withdrawal requirements, particularly "phasing," reflected mainly American concerns but that, at the same time, Armacost had forcefully promoted Islamabad's, and the resistance leaders', sudden interest in an intra-Afghan dialogue. The *mujahideen* still resisted any PDPA representation in a future Afghan government, he said, but had accepted the idea of including a few "good Muslims" living in Kabul. The participation of the former King continued to be a controversial proposition. Armacost felt that during my trip to Islamabad I could play an instrumental role in the efforts to form a new Afghan government.

I told Armacost that on the basis of my discussions in Moscow I was confident that the Soviets were seriously considering a withdrawal time frame of less than a year and had also accepted front loading. But if the United States or Pakistan were to add phasing to the modalities to be stipulated in the settlement, the Soviets might reconsider their withdrawal intentions. (I did not want to ask what precisely was meant by "phasing," but listening to Armacost I deduced that it meant that the Soviets would be required to indicate the number of troops to be withdrawn each month.) Shevardnadze had accepted, I said, verification and monitoring of the withdrawal—a decision that had involved a fundamental

policy change—but had become quite agitated when urging me to ensure that there would be no new United States and Pakistani demands. At the end of our long discussion Armacost told me that the chances of selling the settlement to the *mujahideen,* and to others, particularly in Congress, who described it as "flimsy," would be frustrated if the Soviets did not accept phasing. I said that for years I had been repeatedly told that what was needed in order to sell the settlement was a short withdrawal time frame.

When we discussed Armacost's impressions of the attitude of Pakistan and the resistance leaders toward national reconciliation, I pointed out that the "Scenario" had led to significant changes of position. It seemed to have convinced the Soviet Union that a coalition government under Najibullah was unacceptable and had persuaded Zia to talk about the inclusion of PDPA members in a new government. It had not, however, inspired Pakistan resolutely to nudge the resistance leaders toward the formation of a broad-based government. Armacost said that he had been told in Islamabad that Pakistan had accepted the "Scenario" and that all the issues involved would be urgently addressed.

The information that I received concerning Shevardnadze's trip to Kabul, if reduced to the bare essentials, indicated that he had told Najibullah and the party leadership that the Soviet Union would continue to support and assist the regime but that it would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan very soon and quite swiftly. The discussions had not been easy because Kabul had evidently felt betrayed when Moscow dropped the linkage between national reconciliation and withdrawal. Diehards of the ruling party *nomenklatura* had tenaciously resisted Shevardnadze's contention that a shorter withdrawal time frame should be proposed at the next round of negotiations. Shevardnadze had argued that they should "face reality." In an interview with an Afghan journalist he had pointed out that anyone who refused to join in a broad political dialogue would be putting "some transient, circumstantial, personal considerations and aspirations above the interests of the nation."[7]

As I prepared for my trip to Islamabad and Kabul (it once again was impossible to overcome the aircraft insurance restriction on landing in Teheran), the newspapers were filled with stories about a possible breakthrough on Afghanistan. The Soviets were unusually outspoken. Vitaly Korotich, editor of *Ogonyok,* said that "everybody knows Soviet troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan this summer."[8] Soviet officials kept repeating a statement that Shevardnadze had made after his talks in Kabul: "We would like the year 1988 to be the last year of the presence of Soviet troops in your country." Vorontsov was relieved of his duties as chief disarmament negotiator in order to allow him to concentrate on the solution to the Afghan conflict.[9]

Considerable attention was also given to a successful Soviet-Afghan drive to lift the prolonged guerrilla siege of Khost, a dusty garrison town near the Pakistani border. The *mujahideen* had cut off the main road to Khost and surrounded the town since 1980. In the opinion of many analysts, the Soviets wanted to bolster Najibullah's regime on the eve of the last round of negotiations. But *The Muslim* of Islamabad said that the operation was intended to make a point: "that the Soviets are not on the run, that if the political price of a

withdrawal is too high, then they are prepared to pay the military cost of the war for at least as long as the other side will."[10] President Reagan sent a message to assure the resistance that "the United States will continue and even strengthen its extensive military and political support for the *mujahideen* so long as the Soviet Union continues to press its battle in Afghanistan."[11]

Peshawar was reported to be abuzz over the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal. Differences among insurgent groups were said to have worsened and to have led to fighting among them on Afghan soil. Steven Weisman wrote in the *New York Times* that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the fundamentalist leader, had been accused of attacking other guerrilla troops and that he had charged that many rival groups were financed "by the CIA or the KGB, or both."[12] Richard Weintraub reported in the *Washington Post* that tensions among the resistance leaders "could ultimately hinder the emergence of a stable Afghan governments after the Soviets leave" and that anxiety over resistance conflicts had induced U.S. and Pakistani diplomats to warn "that major details of a pullout agreement needed to be resolved" before the next round of negotiations.[13]

In Washington Secretary of State Shultz welcomed Moscow's indications that its troops would be withdrawn as "very desirable . . . if it turns out to be the case." He said that the United States "would abide by the obligations it has undertaken as part of the U.N.-sponsored talks to stop military aid to the Afghan resistance." Shultz added that the United States presumed "that military supplies from all sources would stop entering Afghanistan."[14] Congressional hardliners were angered by what they claimed was "the helping hand of the Reagan Administration aimed at sparing Mikhail Gorbachev more anguish from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan."[15]

It was a disconcerting mosaic of encouraging developments and potential hurdles. When I landed in Islamabad on January 20 I therefore felt both optimistic and apprehensive. I was also angry because the BBC and many newspapers that I saw in Geneva before my departure reported that the resistance leaders would refuse to meet me. Mowlavi Yunus Khalis, the "rais," or headman, of the resistance leaders, had issued a formal press statement: "The Islamic alliance announces that it is not ready to see Cordovez." As I flew over Saudi Arabia I received a telephone call to inform me that in the United States all television newscasts were highlighting Khalis's snub.

What annoyed me most was that I had not asked the Pakistanis to arrange a meeting with the resistance leaders. I intended to discuss the advisability of such a meeting with President Zia. I did not know if Khalis's statement was the result of a stratagem designed to avert any kind of understanding with the resistance leaders or just an instance of bureaucratic ineptitude. As soon as I landed, after midnight, I demanded an explanation of Pakistani conduct from Bashir Khan Babar, a kind man who had taken over as undersecretary. He did not know what to say but assured me that there were ways of arranging for the leaders to be "ready" to talk.

The following morning Zia telephoned to tell me to say that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pathan nationalist leader, also known as "the Frontier Gandhi," a relentless fighter for Pathan autonomy who had been opposed to the creation of

Pakistan, had died in Peshawar. Prime Minister Gandhi and Najibullah had announced that they would attend the funeral, which was to be held, as requested by Ghaffar Khan, in Afghanistan, to which the body was to be borne overland. It was a situation, quite awkward for Zia, that could create tensions between the Government and the resistance leaders, the Afghan refugees, and Pakistani Pathans.

The rescheduling of my meeting with the President proved very useful because in conversations with Noorani, Sattar, and Junejo I was able to get an impression of Pakistani attitudes. It seemed that they had mixed feelings. On the one hand, they were eager to conclude the settlement as a means of enhancing the Government's image in preparation for parliamentary elections that Zia intended to call "in the near future." On the other hand, it had become increasingly apparent that internecine differences within the resistance were so severe that the formation of a new regime in Kabul would be more, rather than less, difficult after the Soviet withdrawal. What they were saying, in essence, was that Pakistan remained interested in a settlement but that it should be concluded a little later.

I was dumbfounded. Pakistan, I said, had pressed me for a whole year to persuade the Soviets to drop the link between the withdrawal of troops and the formation of a new government. Soviet arguments in support of such a linkage had been dismissed and laughed at as meaningless and unjustified. Zia and Yaqub had assured me a hundred times that Pakistan would be ready to sign with anybody but Karmal—even with his brother or with a clone. Islamabad, like Washington, had consistently maintained that once a withdrawal was agreed upon all other matters would "fall into place." In Moscow the Soviets had promised to consider a withdrawal time frame of less than a year. What should I tell them? That the withdrawal was no longer needed?

Sattar realized that I was extremely upset and came to my hotel in the evening for a quiet chat. He told me that it was difficult to explain to an outsider the nature and the multiple facets of the relationship between the Government and the resistance leaders. The fact of the matter was that such relations were going through a particularly difficult period and were partly entwined with Pakistan's domestic politics. It was essential to arrange my meeting with the resistance leaders and to press them to participate in an intra-Afghan dialogue. It was clear, he told me, that Khalis had made the statement rejecting a meeting with me under the influence of certain quarters, which he did not identify, but which I assumed were the intelligence services. He noted that subsequently Gailani and others had said publicly that they had not been consulted. (*The Muslim* had reported that morning that "Mujahideen Leader Rebukes Alliance Chief"). Please bear in mind, he said as he was leaving, that we may be having transitional problems but that we badly need a settlement.

When I met with Noorani I stressed at one point that the Soviets had taken a "tough political decision" and that Pakistan should have the courage to do likewise. "Thank you very much for your emotional outburst," Noorani answered. After talking to some Pakistani friends and foreign diplomats stationed in Islamabad I had by then concluded, however, that Junejo and most Foreign

Ministry officials, including Noorani, were making sustained efforts to move toward the conclusion of the settlement. They were having tense arguments with the military and the intelligence services. Zia was sitting on the fence, I was told, not having decided what to do. My presence in Islamabad was seen by the settlement supporters as an opportunity to achieve greater cohesion within the Government and to define a joint position for the next round of negotiations. Diplomats suggested that I should act as a catalyst for an approximation between Junejo and Zia, neither of whom, in their view, had come to grips with the issue of defining the Government's strategy regarding the Afghan resistance.

Zia was evidently downhearted. He was hurt by Gandhi's decision to attend Ghaffar Khan's funeral. He did not object, he told me, to the Indian Prime Minister's gesture toward the Pathans, but he had expected a telephone call to inform him of the trip. He said that he was tired and wanted to relinquish his presidential functions as soon as possible. Holding office for eleven years had been a heavy burden, but he was determined to reinstitute a democratic parliamentary system of government.

The President was not therefore in an appropriate frame of mind to have a substantive discussion about the Afghan conflict. He said that the time frame for withdrawal was "irrelevant" and that it was not fair to suggest that he should sign an agreement with a Soviet puppet. His suggestion that a coalition government include PDPA members had been strongly criticized by the resistance leaders, but he nonetheless felt that it should be possible to form a new Afghan government "in four to six weeks." I decided to say nothing except a few polite remarks about how hard we had all worked to achieve a political solution of the Afghan conflict.

The following day I flew to Kabul. On the way to the airport I told Sattar that during the shuttle discussions I would seek to obtain from Kabul assurances of a single-digit time frame for withdrawal and that I expected that Pakistan would make the necessary arrangements for a meeting with the resistance. If either side failed to take the steps that I suggested it would be futile to convene a round of negotiations. Sattar agreed that the approach I proposed was the best and promised to spare no effort to fulfill Pakistan's part of the deal.

Given the eleventh-hour reluctance that seemed to prevail in Kabul and in Islamabad, I described the purpose of that shuttle as "anticipatory excuse-dismantling." If another Geneva round was convened without firm assurances of a shorter time frame for withdrawal, or without the consultations with the resistance envisaged in the draft instruments, my interlocutors could very easily delay the settlement. I expected to count on the assistance of Washington and Moscow if they were indeed interested in moving the negotiations forward.

I was warmly received in Kabul. Wakil said that Afghanistan was ready to participate in the "last" round of negotiations and took the position that there was nothing else to discuss. When I mentioned the withdrawal time frame, he said that the position of his Government was already known and that he assumed that it was acceptable to Pakistan and to the United States. He vehemently denied a press report, which I had not seen, according to which the Soviets or Najibullah had promised that the withdrawal would be completed in 1988.

When I said that the United States and Pakistan expected the time frame to be "less than a year," he reminded me that he was offering a dinner in my honor and ended the meeting.

The following day I was received by Najibullah at Gulkhana Palace. He was similarly charming and equally evasive about the withdrawal time frame. In a very subtle way he managed to avoid any substantive discussion and kept insisting that everything, except a few minor details, was ready for the conclusion of the settlement. Therefore, he pointedly asserted, we should proceed to Geneva without delay. I said that it was still necessary to convince Pakistan, Iran, and the United States, as well as millions of Afghans, that the settlement was possible. He invited me to lunch, during which he refused to talk about the withdrawal time frame. Najibullah kept referring to the former King, who had, he said, sent him a message inquiring what his role would be if a coalition government was set up. Najibullah told me with a smile that he had replied that "kisses are not sent through a messenger."

After lunch we went around the Palace, some sections of which were being repaired. Najibullah asked me to tell Zahir Shah that the Palace was being prepared for his return. He also showed me the place where Taraki had been killed. I knew that there were problems, but I was not able to find out Najibullah's personal position. My impression was that inasmuch as he had agreed to the withdrawal, he felt obliged to convince his leadership colleagues that it was essential to conclude the settlement but that he was encountering increasing opposition. In all his conversations with me, Najibullah therefore seemed to be buying time. That only convinced me that I should press him harder.

Wakil and I had a very tense meeting on January 25, which was a Sunday. After an exchange in which he again tried to sidetrack a discussion about the withdrawal time frame, I insisted quite bluntly that we talk about what I described as the "central issue." In the previous conversation with him, and during my talks with Najibullah, I had gathered that the Soviets had obtained from Kabul a commitment that they would secure the convening of a round of negotiations. Wakil therefore showed some concern when I said that I might return to New York and asked me to stay until Tuesday, implying that he would then be ready to talk about the time frame.

I was awaken on Monday morning, which I had proclaimed a holiday, by a strong explosion that I first thought had occurred in the first floor of the guest house because of the noise made by a big metal artifact when it fell on the marble floor. Roger Neild, my security officer, told me that a car bomb had exploded in a marketplace near the residence. I then listened to the BBC, which reported that in an interview with Lally Weymouth published on Sunday, January 24, in the *Washington Post* Zia had demanded the establishment of a new regime in Kabul before the conclusion of the settlement. "We cannot sign with Najibullah," Zia had said. "How can the government of Pakistan sign the Geneva accords with the man appointed by the Soviet Union who is responsible for killing so many people?" It was another bomb, of a different kind.

I went shopping with my colleagues in Chicken Street, where we visited my friend Noorsher, the best carpet merchant in the world. Whenever I asked the

price of a rug, he responded, "Cheap!" before engaging in a process of intricate negotiations. We had the traditional lunch of plentiful pasta at the Italian Embassy and then went back to the residence. A few minutes later I received an envelope sent by Wakil which contained only the transcript of the BBC report on Zia's statement.

My meeting with Wakil the following day was predictably difficult. He made a special effort to appear agitated and angry, and I tried throughout the discussion to remain calm. He accused Pakistan of bad faith and attacked Zia, using terms which I have forgotten. I told him that when I met Zia he had not said that he would refuse to sign the settlement with Najibullah. It was wrong, I added, to negotiate on the basis of newspaper reports; I was the only official channel of communication between the parties and I had not been asked to convey to Afghanistan the message printed in the *Washington Post*. I noted that before leaving Islamabad I had said in a TV interview that the Soviet withdrawal was not linked to the formation of a new government. As far as I knew my statement had not been questioned by Zia or his spokesman.[16]

It was not, of course, the most propitious moment to discuss the withdrawal of Soviet troops. It was good enough to ascertained that Wakil had not used the occasion to change his mind about going to Geneva. Therefore, as soon as I noticed that he had regained his composure, I took my leave and returned to Pakistan. Wakil said good-bye as if we would not see each other again before Geneva.

Upon my return to Islamabad I wanted to emphasize that Zia's statement had been most unhelpful. I told the press that the diplomatic process was facing serious difficulties.[17] Noorani and Sattar were evidently embarrassed as well as eager, without knowing exactly how, to dispel the negative impressions that the President had created. Abdul Rahman Vezirov, the Soviet Ambassador, told me that he had demanded a formal explanation and that Sattar had asked him to wait a few days. Arnold Raphel, the new American Ambassador, whose intellectual integrity and gentle demeanor made him an extremely effective diplomat, said that he was concerned that the Soviets might refuse to go to Geneva. I told him that I would request that the Government of Pakistan issue a formal statement supporting the Geneva process and persist in my efforts to meet the resistance leaders. Raphel and Vezirov promised to help.

Sattar readily agreed to prepare a statement, which he then showed me in draft form before it was approved by Junejo and Zia. It recognized the role that the *mujahideen* could play in the formation of a broad-based government but at the same time removed any notion of conditionality. The statement also affirmed that Pakistan remained committed to the draft instruments that had been agreed upon and requested me to extend my stay in the region "in order to promote the resolution of the outstanding issues." The statement added that "the formation of a broad-based interim government" was dependent upon "the participation of all Afghan elements, including the *mujahideen,* the refugees, and the PDPA."[18]

There followed a series of protracted, tortuous, and exasperating efforts to organize a meeting with the resistance leaders. I was not informed of all the details, but on the basis of what I was told I assumed that it was first necessary to

arrange a meeting between Zia and Junejo, which was followed by seemingly endless consultations with the military, the intelligence services, and the resistance leaders. The Government was required to issue a second statement that stressed the significance of the alliance of *mujahideen.* Additional meetings between Zia and Junejo were also needed. The *mujahideen* issued several press statements demanding, and subsequently withdrawing, specific conditions. I spent long hours, sometimes several days, waiting for the results of each specific *démarche.*

During one of those intermissions I went with my colleagues to Lahore to pay a visit to my old friend Syed Amjad Ali, whom I had first met when he was Ambassador to the U.N. in the early sixties. Walking on the lawn of his typical colonial home one felt as if one had gone back a hundred years. The whole family of Amjad Ali had been assembled for the occasion. After lunch we were invited to the Polo Club. We also walked around the Shalimar gardens and visited the Badshahi Mosque and the Fort.

Back in Islamabad I had a second meeting, and dinner, with Zia. Not a word was said about the *Washington Post* interview. He said that he wanted to "plan a common strategy" for the conclusion of the settlement and asked many questions about the list of "good Muslims" that my staff had prepared. Zia repeated that it should be possible to set up an interim coalition government within four to six weeks, but Junejo told me the following day that the new government should be established in "not more than four weeks." Zia assured me that the resistance leaders would be ready for a meeting "very soon" but did not say when. He emphasized that they should not be "pushed too much" and implied that what was important was to hold the meeting, not its results. I told him that I intended to go back to Kabul and that I expected the meeting with the leaders to take place upon my return.

Back in the hotel I was having a drink with my colleagues when we heard, at one in the morning, a startling radio report from a major news organization. According to the report, Zia, Khalis, and I had been "seen" at the President's residence having a discussion which had become increasingly heated to the point of physical violence. We immediately tried to contact the correspondent in Islamabad who had filed the story but failed to find him. The following morning he personally brought me a written apology. We were undoubtedly surrounded by people who were determined to create trouble.

The following day we tried to fly to Kabul but were informed that there had been a snowstorm in Afghanistan and that it would not be possible to land. I used the time in Islamabad to talk to a number of foreign correspondents and to the U.S. and Soviet Ambassadors. Raphel told me that Zia intended personally to ask the leaders to have a meeting with me, and Vezirov said that he had sent a message requesting Moscow to persuade Kabul to show flexibility on the withdrawal time frame. On the basis of his discussions with Noorani, Vezirov had also told Moscow not to take the *Post* interview too seriously. He did not appear, however, thoroughly convinced that the Pakistanis were ready for Geneva.

When I eventually reached Kabul, my discussions with Wakil and Na-

jibullah were not encouraging. Wakil was still annoyed about Zia's interview and wanted to end the meeting with an agreement that the next, which he again called the "last," round of negotiations should be held in February, "not one day later." When I suggested a ten-month time frame he replied that he "took note" of my proposal and that he would give me an answer at Geneva. Najibullah said that Pakistan should make a new proposal at Geneva and that he would consider it. I reiterated that if there was no agreement "in principle" on a time frame of "less than a year" the Geneva negotiations would not be resumed and suggested that if he needed more time I was willing to return to Kabul a few days later. A tense discussion ensued during which I realized that he was still torn between Soviet determination to conclude the settlement and the leadership's reluctance to accept a shorter withdrawal time frame. He finally agreed that I would return.

Back in Islamabad, on February 2 I was told that Zia had been trying to talk to Khalis but that the meeting had been postponed because the President had traveled to Karachi. Vezirov gave me a message from Moscow: The Soviets insisted that the next round be held in February and shared "the views that you have expressed to Najib." Waiting for the meeting with the "unmagnificent seven"—as George Arney had described them in the *Guardian* of January 22—was like waiting for Godot. My foreign ministry friends were desperate. The British Ambassador, Nicholas Barrington, who was a personal friend since the days when he was posted in New York, invited me for lunch and seemed to think that relations between Zia and Junejo had improved. There was a rally of Afghans at Quetta "to support the peace initiatives of Cordovez" and to call for the return of Zahir Shah. I was taken to Muree, a beautiful mountain resort, for another day of sightseeing and golf.

On February 5 in the evening Sattar came to the hotel and with a big smile told me that Khalis had invited me for lunch in Peshawar the following day. The trip to Peshawar started early in the morning with the precision of a military operation. I was first taken to the Foreign Ministry so as to give the impression that I was going to hold a meeting with Noorani, but we left almost immediately through a back door and got into military cars heading toward the airport. We then boarded a very noisy helicopter and, upon arrival in Peshawar, were driven to the resistance headquarters, located in a spacious and heavily guarded bungalow in the University sector of the city. I was greeted at the door by Khalis. Hekmatyar and the other fundamentalist leaders had sent "high-level" representatives.

Like all Afghans, Khalis was extremely courteous. George Arney had described him in the *Guardian* as a "sixty-eight-year-old *mullah* with a long henna-dyed beard, thick tufts of black hair sprouting from his ears, who picks his teeth in public and speaks only his native tongue, Pashto."[19] When he was elected as chairman of the *mujahideen* alliance, after months of wrangling, bitter recriminations, and walkouts, Edward Girardet had said in the *Christian Science Monitor* that Khalis had been known as the "fighting *mullah*" for his willingness to battle the Soviets but that he had lost much of his nerve.[20] I had the impression that he felt quite uncomfortable in his role as a politician.

We first had an exchange, which I had anticipated, on the absence of the

resistance at the negotiations. I told him that I would have much preferred to hold the negotiations "with all the concerned parties"—if only because my job as a mediator would have been much easier—but that participation in the negotiations had been decided upon by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Nonetheless, as a U.N. official I had always felt duty-bound to protect and defend the interests of all the Afghan refugees. I very much hoped that the resistance would recognize that the proposed settlement would create the conditions which would enable the Afghans to decide their own future. I then outlined my "Scenario" without in any way giving the impression that it was the only possible approach to the formation of a new government.

Khalis told me that the resistance leaders had examined the draft settlement instruments and that the alliance had instructed him to submit amendments to certain terms that had been deemed to be offensive to the resistance. The fact that the alliance of *mujahideen* had submitted specific amendments to the draft instruments was to prove very useful; it was an unequivocal demonstration that a process of consultation had indeed taken place. I promised to convey the amendments to my interlocutors.

I told Khalis that the Soviet Union was under enormous pressure to withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan and that the eyes of the world were focused on the Geneva process. The *mujahideen* in the battlefield and the diplomats at the negotiating table had generated these pressures. The United Nations had mobilized the international community to put an end to the occupation of Afghanistan. It was therefore only fair to say that we were working in the same direction. But if the Soviets made a formal commitment to withdraw their troops, the eyes of the world would then turn to the Afghans. They had repeatedly said that the presence of foreign troops was the one obstacle that prevented them from exercising their right of self-determination.

Khalis said that the *mujahideen* were doubtful of Soviet intentions. While talking of peace and reconciliation, the Soviets were consolidating their military positions. The alliance had decided to set up a new Afghan government that would comprise *mujahideen,* refugees, and Muslims living inside the country. The new government, he added, would "pave the way for the withdrawal of the Soviets, restore peace, oversee the return of Afghan refugees, and help reconstruct the war-ravaged country." I said that he had confirmed that we were working in the same direction and suggested meekly that "other" Afghans also be taken into account. Khalis made a long comment, but the translator only said that "those" were "monarchists."

We then had a bounteous lunch. It was all very cordial, even friendly, and we said good-bye in good spirits. Before boarding the helicopter I was surrounded by journalists, who had been invited by Pakistani officials to the airport once they were certain that the meeting had proceeded smoothly. I said that the meeting had been "useful," that Khalis and I had been in agreement on a number of points, and that we were working in the same direction. (I subsequently heard that the alliance had issued a press release in which it was said that Khalis had told me that the Geneva process was "useless.") Only a few minutes after I

returned to the hotel the telephone rang and the reception desk attendant informed me that "the President is on his way up."

Zia was in an upbeat mood. He congratulated me warmly and suggested that the meeting had been crucial in "persuading these people to move." We spent about half an hour together. It was difficult to know what Zia was thinking, but I detected a slightly more positive attitude. He agreed that "the changed circumstances" made it easier to convene a new round of negotiations if the Soviets were indeed determined to withdraw. I said that I intended to return to Kabul to seek a formal commitment to a shorter withdrawal time frame. I wanted at all costs to prevent a last-minute collapse of the negotiations. I said this in a tone that denoted an assumption that at Geneva Pakistan would be ready to sign.

It was Sunday, February 7. On my arrival in Kabul I was informed that Wakil was visiting a "number" of Middle Eastern countries. (He actually visited only Kuwait and Libya.) Before his departure he had told the press that "Kabul had already said its full words [about the settlement] to Mr. Cordovez." Inasmuch as an appointment with Najibullah had not been confirmed, I found myself in a rather uncomfortable, but not altogether unprecedented, situation. I made clear to the chief of protocol, as we drove to the residence, that I intended to return to Islamabad that evening—after a meeting with the President. A few minutes after lunch I was driven to the Palace.

Najibullah was obviously very tense. Only a few minutes into the conversation I realized that he was not ready to say anything. He kept insisting that there would be a satisfactory agreement on the withdrawal time frame at Geneva. His only concern seemed to be that a round of negotiations be held in February. I again made very clear to him that there would be no round of negotiations if he did not undertake to accept a time frame of less than a year. He tried to persuade me to stay until the following day, but I refused. He then placed his hand on his heart and said: "I promise, tomorrow." Najibullah was obviously having enormous problems with the leadership and with Moscow. I agreed to return the following day.

In a way, Kabul's reluctance to talk about the withdrawal time frame helped me in Islamabad. At dinner with Sattar it seemed to be mutually assumed that if Najibullah accepted a withdrawal time frame of less than a year, I would, regardless of the position that Zia had taken when I arrived in Islamabad, convene a round of negotiations. Sattar and Junejo had evidently been able to persuade Zia that Pakistan should not insist on a postponement of the "final" round.

Sattar confirmed this understanding the following day, when we met at the Foreign Ministry before I left for Kabul. Sattar also told me that he had persuaded Zia to allow Zahir Shah to travel to Pakistan to visit the refugee camps but that the President had subsequently changed his mind when he learned that Natwar Singh, the Indian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, had visited the former King in Rome "as part of efforts by India to resolve the Afghanistan issue."[21] The Indian marginal incursion into the Afghan conflict had irritated the President of Pakistan and had thwarted my efforts to achieve a more forceful involvement of the cautious monarch in the reconciliation process.

Upon arrival in the Afghan capital I was not taken to the residence but straight to my meeting with Najibullah. He seemed totally relaxed, smiling broadly, as if to emphasize that he was trustworthy. He first made a speech about the character of the Afghans and about the long struggle for peace that his people had sustained. The President then solemnly handed me a document that, he said, was the text of an announcement he intended to make that evening. President Gorbachev would make a similar statement in Moscow. I read it quickly in his presence.

"Seeking to facilitate a speedy and successful conclusion of the Geneva talks," the statement read, "the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of Afghanistan have agreed to set a specific date for beginning the withdrawal of Soviet troops—May 15, 1988—and to complete their withdrawal within ten months. The date is set based on the assumption that agreements on the settlement would be signed no later than March 15, 1988."

I thanked Najibullah for fulfilling his promise and for the contents of his message. I told him that a round of negotiations would, as agreed, be convened and that I expected that the settlement would then be concluded.

Before taking off, the pilot of the aircraft told me that he had been instructed to take a very long route on the way back to Pakistan. The flight therefore took two hours, about double the usual flying time between the two capitals. After we landed in Islamabad a U.N. press officer showed me an AFP report that read: "Afghan rebels planned to shoot down the plane carrying U.N. mediator Diego Cordovez in an attempt to disrupt peace talks in Geneva."

Just as soon as I reached my hotel I was told that Soviet Ambassador Vezirov was in the lobby and wanted to see me urgently. He seemed agitated and said that he had an important message from Moscow. President Gorbachev would deliver a statement announcing that the Soviet Union would begin withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan on May 15. I told Vezirov that Najibullah had given me the text of the statement. Unfortunately I was late to a dinner invitation, I said, because I would have liked to drink a glass of champagne to celebrate what was undoubtedly the breakthrough that we had been waiting for years.

When I reached the American Embassy for a dinner that Arny Raphel had arranged at least ten days earlier, to which he had also invited Yaqub Khan, I found myself in the somewhat peculiar situation of informing the Ambassador of the United States that the President of the Soviet Union was about to make an important statement, the text of which had been given to me in advance. Raphel immediately asked one of his aides to listen to the statement in the Embassy's communications room while we settled down for a very relaxed drink.

When Yaqub arrived, wearing a striking black cape with an iridescent red taffeta lining, he heard the news with overt mixed feelings. He was happy because he considered that he had been his Government's leading advocate of a settlement but cheerless because somebody else would sign it. We were all in a joyous mood and even more so when the information that I had brought was confirmed. Soviet regular evening television programs, including the broadcasting of a movie version of Mikhail Sholokhov's novel *And Quiet Flows the Don,* had been interrupted to stress the significance of the statement. After reporting

the news the Embassy aide dared say that the withdrawal time frame that Gorbachev had announced was not quite what the United States was expecting. His boss retorted that it was plain silly not to assume that the Soviet would accept a single-digit time frame at Geneva.

The following day I ended my twenty-day stay in the region. Before leaving I went to the Presidential Palace to take my leave of the President. Apparently he was no longer wavering, and he confirmed that Pakistan would fully participate in the last stage of the negotiations. At an airport press conference I forcefully affirmed that "no new issues" had emerged during the long days of consultations held in Islamabad and Kabul. I also announced that a round of negotiations would start on March 2. Mindful of Soviet insistence that the round should be convened in February, I added: "Those who were obsessive that the negotiations should be resumed in February can always say that the starting day will be the 31st of February!"

After flying many hours, during which I mostly slept, we landed in Geneva. When the aircraft stopped inside the hangar I noticed that it was surrounded by dozens of journalists who were there to greet me. For some reason I felt a deeper sense of achievement then than when the settlement was signed a few weeks later.

IV

Many sons of Russia
Have fallen on Afghan
soil
In the recent years.
So, why is it
That at home
The Obelisks
Are silent about our boys
Who have died fighting
For our friends?

Army Surgeon
Gennady Kostyuk

When I returned to my office in New York I found that it was inundated with newspaper clippings. "In his statement on Monday the Soviet leader for the first time put his personal authority and the authority of his position behind a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan," said an editorial in the *Times* of London.[22] A British diplomat was quoted as saying: "This thing is serious enough to be taken seriously. We do appear to be reaching some kind of end game."[23] "Moscow is convincing even the most skeptical of its desire to get out" was the comment of the *Christian Science Monitor*.[24] The *New York Times* said: "From all appearances, Moscow has made the painful decision to lose the war. The U.S. is now on the verge of achieving what it has not achieved since the

Austrian State Treaty of 1955: the removal of Russian occupation forces."[25] Don Oberdorfer and David Ottaway wrote in the *Washington Post*: "Adding weight to Mr. Gorbachev's announcement are reports that a reduction of Soviet personnel in Afghanistan may already have begun."[26]

Among the clippings there was a news dispatch according to which growing disillusionment inside the Soviet Union about the war in Afghanistan had been encouraged by a Kremlin decision to allow publication of a more realistic picture of the grim realities of life for those serving in Afghanistan. *Pravda* had carried a remarkable account of a sentimental, moving, and at times angry evening in a military café during which men and women who had served in Afghanistan read out poetry inspired by the war.[27]

At the same time the Soviet Government seemed to be waging a domestic public relations campaign to combat negative reactions to its withdrawal plans. Western analysts had long assumed that the withdrawal from Afghanistan was a contentious issue within the party leadership, possibly pitting Gorbachev and Shevardnadze against conservative forces. The feeling of damaged pride was apparently not nearly as widespread as it was in the United States following the American withdrawal from Vietnam, but the older generation, weaned on the idea that the Soviet Union should always be victorious, felt bitter that Moscow had invested so much in the Afghan war and would have so little to show for it. "This is the first time in the history of our country that we entered a war and had to leave it in compromise. That's a heavy psychological blow," a World War II veteran had said.[28]

Western diplomats in Kabul began reporting the departure of Soviet advisers and their families. Some instructors at Kabul University had not been allowed to return from holiday in the Soviet Union. There was a spate of stories about panic among government officials. All the senior staff in one technical ministry was said to have left the country. Diplomats foresaw fighting among factions within the ruling party as well as among the *mujahideen*. The secret police force, KHAD, was reported to have been given the go-ahead to increase its strength.

In Peshawar, a tragic development poignantly underscored how urgent it was to bring about a degree of accommodation among exiled Afghan factions. On February 11 Professor Bhauddin Majrooh, a respected former diplomat, provincial governor, and dean of Kabul University, was murdered by an unknown gunman at the office of his Afghan Information Center. Majrooh had managed to establish a place for himself in the Afghan resistance community without becoming involved in party politics. He had published in his weekly newsletter the results of a survey among refugees in Pakistan showing that 70 per cent wanted former King Zahir Shah to return as titular head of state. Fundamentalist resistance leaders had denounced the survey as "a fake promoted by western governments to help their favorite." Majrooh's death was consequently linked to the power struggle within the resistance groups, but other sources speculated that the Kabul regime might have been involved in the assassination. "It was the perfect terrorist act. They got their target, and everybody is left blaming different groups," said a diplomat in Islamabad. "How can you build a new Afghanistan with these people?" asked another.[29]

The attitudes of the resistance leaders toward the formation of a new government in Kabul became a major source of concern in the days preceding the last round of negotiations. Following my meeting with Khalis and Gorbachev's withdrawal announcement there were at least three big rallies of *mujahideen* and refugees in Pakistan to urge the leaders to accept Zahir Shah as head of the government to be formed in Kabul. He and his father were described as "Muslim kings," and it was stressed that the former King could bring unity to the ranks of Afghans.[30] Noorani said during a BBC interview that Pakistan had no objection to Zahir Shah.[31]

Following intense negotiations between the Government of Pakistan and the resistance leaders, a communiqué was issued in which the *mujahideen* alliance proposed a two-tiered interim government that would hold office until the completion of the Soviet withdrawal and would then hand over power to an elected government. The top tier of the proposed interim government would be a "supreme council" comprising the seven leaders of the resistance. The second tier would be a twenty-eight-member transitional government that would represent "all factions of the Afghan nation." No names were mentioned, but half of the cabinet was to be drawn from the resistance and the other half was to be divided between refugees and "Moslems presently living in Afghanistan."

The new government was to be established before the conclusion of the settlement and would become a signatory to the accords. Before the communiqué was issued, an unidentified "senior Pakistani official" had said that the resistance's acceptance of "even a minor role for some members of the pro-Soviet Afghan government would mark a step forward."[32] But after the new government was announced, Khalis cast doubts as to whether the resistance was really prepared to share power. "If we accepted a coalition with the Communists after nine years of fighting," he asked, "what was the purpose of our jihad [holy war]?"[33] The possibility that disagreements within the resistance alliance would erupt into open fighting was enhanced when moderate leaders and guerrilla commanders traveled to Rome to ask Zahir Shah to take part in the interim government.[34]

Some other *mujahideen* were busy preparing for the announced Soviet withdrawal by stockpiling vast amounts of arms and ammunition inside Afghanistan. I had been told in Islamabad that stockpiling (about which the Soviets had already warned me) would be difficult because most of the mules used for the transportation of arms supplies, including Stinger and Blowpipe missiles, had recently died as a result of some sort of equestrian epidemic. Subsequently, however, the CIA flew dozens, if not hundreds, of mules from Tennessee to Pakistan in Boeing 747 aircraft. (Somebody said that the mules were not from Tennessee but from Georgia and that they had demanded Business Class accommodation.) Be it as it may, the fact was that the *mujahideen* were considered at the time to be the best-equipped guerrilla force in the world.

Although it had been clearly understood during the shuttle discussions that Pakistan would not raise the issue of the formation of a new government as a condition to conclude the settlement, several sources indicated after my return to New York that officials in Islamabad had continued to insist that, even if an

agreement on a withdrawal time frame was reached, Pakistan would not sign the accords unless an interim government had already come into being. On February 16 a Foreign Office spokesman said: "Without a new government in Kabul, strife will not cease. Without peace the refugees will not return. A comprehensive solution must assure peace in Afghanistan."

The spokesman's statement, a copy of which was delivered to my office by the Pakistani mission to the U.N., added that "Moscow had acknowledged the organic link between the Geneva texts and national reconciliation. . . . But Moscow has changed its position and insists on delinking the Geneva drafts from the peace process. This could undermine the well considered Cordovez plan. . . . Pakistan urges the Soviet Union to rejoin efforts for a comprehensive solution which alone would free its good name of the stigma of intervention."[35]

The position announced in Islamabad provoked a sharp reaction by the Soviet Union and a large number of negative comments in Western capitals. (I myself was bewildered by the instant approval of my "plan," which Pakistan had ignored for months.) The Soviets told me that the statement blatantly contradicted a formal undertaking made by Zia when Vorontsov, in line with the understanding that he and I had reached in Moscow, visited Islamabad the day after my departure. Vorontsov said in Moscow that Pakistan was "feverishly seeking pretexts" and that Islamabad had "repeated hundreds of times that only one thing was needed to have the refugees home: the withdrawal of Soviet troops."[36] A very angry Ambassador Belonogov showed me again the notes of the meeting between Zia and Vorontsov in which he had underlined in red a statement that the President was supposed to have made on that occasion: "Pakistan will sign the accords in Geneva not later than March 31." *Pravda* said on February 25 that "the Pakistani Administration has started performing odd political pirouettes and impudently made a 180-degree turn from its former stand."

Western comments did not show as much concern with Pakistan's change of position as with the danger that the Soviet withdrawal might consequently be delayed or canceled. Former National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski said that the United States should not permit the "knotty issue" of forming an interim government in Afghanistan to delay the promised withdrawal of Soviet troops. Brzezinski warned that Washington had no interest in becoming "mired in complex negotiations" over an interim government that "would almost certainly lead to serious disputes between the resistance and the United States or the United States and Pakistan."[37] The *Christian Science Monitor* reported on February 19 that U.S. officials "were angered when Pakistan resurrected the linkage." "We've been trying to get the Soviets out for years. The United States could hardly urge the Russians to 'stick around' while the Afghans try to put a coalition together," said a senior State Department official quoted in the article.[38]

Many Western commentators felt that even if suitable transitional arrangements, such as an interim coalition government, were indeed desirable, there was no guarantee that the seven resistance factions, each coveting broader

power, would cease fighting among themselves. European analysts also considered that if elections were held, the result might perpetuate the Najibullah regime or reflect the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalists. The view was therefore widely expressed in most Western capitals that fears about the disorder that might follow the Soviet withdrawal should not delay a settlement on the off-chance that more satisfactory arrangements could be worked out.

Relations between the United States and Pakistan were again strained. After a meeting with Shultz on February 17, Noorani told the press that the United States was "not adverse to the idea of the creation of a coalition government" and that Shultz had promised to convey the proposal to the Soviet Government.[39] But throughout a long meeting in his office the following day Armacost assured me that the United States continued to consider that the withdrawal was the key issue, however important the formation of a new government might be to ensure a smooth withdrawal. Armacost apparently took the same position in his discussions with Pakistani officials and with the resistance leaders when he visited Islamabad a few days later. Sheila Tefft reported in the *Christian Science Monitor* that Pakistanis were increasingly wondering "whether close links with the United States, forged by the Afghanistan war, will survive in times of peace."[40]

Washington was convinced that the Najibullah government would not survive a Soviet withdrawal and was accordingly rather more concerned about what it called the "details" and "specifics" of the withdrawal arrangements as well as, increasingly, the need to secure a Soviet commitment to discontinue military assistance to Kabul simultaneously with the cessation of arms provisions to the resistance. Armacost told me that "symmetry" was an "agreement-breaker" to the United States because otherwise it could not persuade Congress and public opinion to support the settlement. All the replies from the Soviets on the issue had been elusive.

I told Armacost that I did not know what was meant by the "details" and "specifics" of the withdrawal but that the Soviets had already agreed to "front loading," which had not been originally envisaged in the draft settlement. If new provisions were requested, Moscow might conclude, I added, that the United States was unable "to take yes for an answer." Armacost said that a further "benchmark" of withdrawal beyond the first (front-loading) tranche would be necessary. Instead of adding new stipulations, I said, it would be much wiser to concentrate on the other issue, the suspension of arms shipments to Kabul.

I felt that "symmetry" was indeed a legitimate subject of concern because any external action that could fuel hostilities would be at variance with the spirit and the letter of the settlement. Yaqub had rightly argued that on D-Day Pakistan and the United States would be obliged to execute an "act" while the Soviet Union would be required to initiate a "process." That provision had been accepted at an early stage in the negotiations because Islamabad and Washington undoubtedly felt that otherwise the settlement would not be possible. Questions regarding Soviet military assistance to Afghanistan had never been raised, presumably because it had been assumed that the Kabul regime would collapse

shortly after the settlement. "There was a certain hypothetical quality to some of this at the time," a senior State Department official had said.[41]

Shultz was upbeat after holding talks in Moscow with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze on February 22. He did not have, he said, the "slightest doubt" that the Soviets would withdraw from Afghanistan, and he indicated that Washington would not support Pakistan's insistence that a coalition government be formed in Kabul before the signing of the settlement. Gary Lee and Don Oberdorfer, who traveled with Shultz to Moscow, reported in the *Washington Post* that when the discussions were concluded Shultz did not mention the "symmetry" request that he had insistently made before the talks. Shevardnadze had said that Moscow could not "reasonably disregard" its obligations to aid Afghanistan under a 1921 treaty signed by Lenin. But he had added that it was also possible that no more arms would be needed after the withdrawal.[42]

I first thought that an understanding on symmetry, however ambiguous, had been reached in Moscow, but I was subsequently informed that Shultz and Shevardnadze had agreed only to continue the discussions through diplomatic channels. When Robert Peck, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, testified before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs on February 25, he stated that the United States and the Soviet Union "would agree to the same basic commitment regarding noninterference and nonintervention." The United States would be prepared, he added, to prohibit American military assistance to the Afghan resistance, and "we would expect the Soviet Union to show reciprocal restraint under the Geneva Accords in stopping its military support for the Kabul regime." "We may be on the threshold of an historic achievement," said Peck in reaffirming that the withdrawal of Soviet troops—which should be "complete, credible, verifiable and irreversible"—was Washington's overriding objective.

Throughout the month of February I and my staff made all the necessary preparations for the round of negotiations. The most minute details were carefully worked out, and solutions were foreseen for all possible eventualities. Particular attention was given to all questions relating to the proposed monitoring arrangements. Senior military officials from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Fiji, Ghana, Ireland, Nepal, Poland, and Sweden were selected for the operation. General Rauli Helminen of Finland was designated as head of the monitoring teams, and a small auxiliary complement of civilian staff was organized.

On February 29 I left New York with all my colleagues. As I flew over the Atlantic I had the usual mixed feelings, with an added sense of worry and uncertainty. A friend had given me a most interesting essay, which I read on the plane, that showed that foreign occupiers had always found it extremely difficult to extricate themselves gracefully from Afghanistan. "Perhaps the most disastrous attempt occurred in 1842 when 16,500 British troops, family members, and camp followers retreated from Kabul. Despite elaborate assurances of safe passage to the border, the bedraggled British convoy was attacked repeatedly by Afghan tribal chiefs perched in the mountains. Many died from the freezing cold. In the end, a lone army doctor survived."[43]

V

The big question mark when the eleventh round of negotiations started in Geneva on Tuesday, March 2, was whether Pakistan would sign the legal instruments for the settlement. But there was also an unprecedented air of expectation that the negotiations were, finally, going to succeed. The press office told me that no U.N. meeting had ever attracted so many foreign correspondents. There were American, European, and Japanese TV crews running around and discovering secret doors and corridors in that atrocious architectural structure that is the Palais des Nations. I told my charming landlords that I did not know how long I would be required to stay.

As soon as I arrived in Geneva I had a long meeting with Nikolai Kozirev, who told me emphatically that the settlement should be signed during the round of negotiations. He demanded that I take all the necessary measures to bring the diplomatic process to an end and that I press Pakistan to sign the settlement instruments immediately after the "very few" outstanding issues were ironed out. Kozirev pointed out that the formation of a new government in Afghanistan was not on the agenda of the negotiations and was not formally within my mandate. The Soviet Union, he said, had taken the decision to conclude the settlement on the basis of the positions taken and the arguments advanced by the United States and Pakistan during the past year. His Government would hence consider unacceptable any attempt to delay the signature of the settlement instruments.

I told Kozirev that he was undoubtedly aware of the situation prevailing in Pakistan. I had seen a news dispatch according to which Noorani, who had been appointed as the head of his delegation, intended to leave Geneva after a few days to participate in the political consultations that were taking place in Islamabad. It was important, I added, to finalize the settlement instruments—including, of course, the withdrawal time frame. If all the settlement instruments were ready, Pakistan would be able to exert pressure on the resistance leaders. It would not be necessarily disastrous, however, to allow a few days to elapse between the finalization and the signing of the instruments.

Kozirev told me that Noorani's trip to Islamabad should not take more than a few days (he had heard that it might take two or three weeks) because otherwise Wakil would also leave and the negotiations would break down. With reluctance he conceded that perhaps a few days could elapse between finalization of the settlement instruments and the signing ceremony.

When, on the opening day of the negotiations, Noorani was asked by the press if he would sign the settlement instruments, he replied: "We will cross that bridge when we come to it." Noorani added that he would leave Geneva on Friday, March 4, and return on March 6 because on March 5 he would attend a meeting in Islamabad with the opposition parties. Wakil told a press conference that the question of the formation of a new government was not on the agenda and that it was a "separate" matter. I said that it was a question that "should be left to the Afghans alone" to settle. David Ottaway insinuated in the *Washington Post* that I was prodding Pakistan "to drop its demand for the

formation of a new coalition government in Kabul" and distancing myself from that issue.[44]

At the first meeting with each of my interlocutors I said that our agenda consisted, in the main, of five items: the withdrawal time frame, the changes to the refugees' instrument suggested by the resistance leaders, the border issue, the technical arrangements for implementing the monitoring scheme, and the arrangements for the signing of the settlement instruments. And then came the first surprise. Wakil not only agreed to the agenda—with only a few derogatory remarks about the "aberration" of considering amendments suggested by "people who represent nobody"—but then accepted the "front-loading" formula that Junejo had proposed to the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad. (Vorontsov and Shevardnadze had rejected it when I visited Moscow.) It was therefore formally agreed that 50 per cent of the Soviet troops would be withdrawn in three months. Noorani and Sattar were astounded.

The following morning there was a second surprise. Wakil told me at the very beginning of the meeting that Afghanistan accepted the nine-month withdrawal time frame "that Pakistan had suggested during my shuttle consultations" in February. We accordingly had, then and there, a formal agreement on a front-loaded, single-digit time frame for withdrawal. The issue that had taken so many years of negotiations was settled. It was a most adroit move by the Soviets to convince everybody of their determination to end the occupation of Afghanistan and to put pressure on the political consultations that were to take place in Islamabad. Wakil had gone straight from the conference room to the press center to inform correspondents that there was an agreement on withdrawal.

Noorani and Sattar were unable to hide their predicament. At the next formal meeting they raised a number of questions regarding the withdrawal arrangements, including the need to stipulate in the settlement the number of troops that should withdraw each month, the removal of all land mines, and the monitoring by sector that would accompany the troop evacuation. They also proposed a new provision on "disengagement"—an undertaking by the Soviets not to engage in any military activity other than self-defense—during the withdrawal process. There was no doubt that the Soviets had scored an unexpected coup and that Pakistan was looking for ways to prolong the negotiations.

In private Noorani and Sattar told me that there was no question that Pakistan would sign the settlement instruments. What was being debated in Islamabad was essentially the date when the signing would take place. They assured me that if the settlement instruments were not signed by March 15, as required by Gorbachev, they would, in any case, be signed within the month of March, in line with the understanding reached in Islamabad between Zia and Vorontsov. Noorani emphasized that his Government considered the date of May 15 for the beginning of the withdrawal as "sacred." (I had received a report to the effect that Washington was willing to be flexible on the signing date provided that the starting date of the withdrawal was not changed.) According to Noorani and Sattar, the assumption underlying Pakistan's position was that a new Afghan government would be formed during the month of March.

Noorani was anxious to know what was I prepared to do in order to promote the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan. I referred him to my "Scenario" and could not help making a remark about how distressingly ironic it was that Pakistan should be trying to push me into action after so many months of apparent or deliberate aloofness. Pakistan's new attitude on the formation of an Afghan government, I added, was perceived by the Soviets with the same suspicion that Pakistan and the United States had shown before the Soviets dropped the linkage between national reconciliation and the withdrawal of troops. The Soviets were now convinced that Pakistan was trying to delay the conclusion of the settlement, I stressed, but I was sure that once the settlement instruments were signed they would be willing to help. That was the message that Noorani should take to Islamabad.

Noorani and Sattar also raised once again the question of the consultations with the refugees. I told them that it had been very clearly understood in Islamabad that my trip to Peshawar would be deemed to constitute the consultation envisaged in the draft of the settlement. Through Khalis the resistance leaders had submitted their observations on the draft instrument concerning the refugees, and I had already conveyed these to Wakil and to the Soviets. The Pakistanis did not raise that question again. But Noorani kept insisting that "some movement" on the formation of a new government (the very same words that the other side had used so often before) would be necessary to enable Pakistan to sign the settlement instruments. He mentioned, as an example, the possibility of convening in Geneva, during the month of March, the meeting of Afghans envisaged in the "Scenario."

I also met in my office with Robert Peck, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State who had traveled to Geneva to follow the negotiations. It was the first time since the negotiations started that a senior State Department official had been given that assignment. He was accompanied by a State Department lawyer, John Arbogast, who was already in touch with Raymond Sommereyns.

Peck said that the United States would need "some time" to examine the settlement instruments once these were finalized. The United States, he said, shared Pakistan's concern about the formation of a new Afghan government and considered that I should be more "active" and "visible" in my efforts to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue. Peck also requested that more specific details of the withdrawal arrangements be included in the settlement or at least in a separate memorandum of understanding. I told him that Kozirev had taken the position that such military matters did not belong in the settlement but that the Soviet military authorities in charge of conducting the withdrawal would convey all the necessary details to the U.N. military officers responsible for the monitoring arrangements. Kozirev had even said that if the United States insisted on having such details, the Soviets would be willing to make them available to the US military.

Peck told me that the United States was pursuing actively the idea of a symmetry agreement with the Soviets. The question was being discussed with Ambassador Yuri Dubinin in Washington, and Ambassador Matlock had been

instructed to hold discussions with Vorontsov in Moscow. Washington, Peck emphasized, would not be able to support the settlement unless a symmetry agreement was concluded. A "sense of the Senate" resolution, approved 77–0, had warned the Administration against cutting off military aid to the resistance on the basis of a "bad" settlement. Senator Robert Byrd of Virginia had expressed concern that the Administration might "sell the Afghan resistance down the river."

When I met with Kozirev a few minutes later he seemed somewhat less rigid on the question of a new government. When I told him what Noorani and Peck had said, he replied that the Soviets had spent a whole year sending "signals" to Islamabad and Washington, signals that had remained unanswered, on the need for concerted efforts to promote national reconciliation. He did agree, however, that the Soviet Union would be willing to participate in efforts to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue as long as Pakistan undertook not to delay the signing of the settlement instruments. When I mentioned the possibility of reaching an understanding to organize the meeting of Afghans in Geneva immediately after the signing of the settlement instruments Kozirev reluctantly agreed to consult Moscow.

Before his departure for Islamabad on Friday, March 4, I told Noorani once again that, in order to ensure Soviet support, Pakistan should not delay the signing of the settlement instruments and should be more willing to accept a role for former King Zahir Shah. Noorani said that Islamabad was not opposed to the former King's involvement but that there might be a strong reaction from some of the resistance leaders. Sattar told me that his guess was that Islamabad would decide to sign, probably after March 15, on condition that there should be some "visible" movement towards the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul. Zia, he said, was under strong pressures not to sign. "But don't worry," he added. "It is only a question of time." Peck told me that, regardless of Islamabad's position, the United States would not be ready to sign before a scheduled meeting between Shultz and Shevardnadze in Washington on March 22 at which an agreement on symmetry was expected to be concluded.

Thus ended the first week of the negotiations. Given the fact that efforts to secure the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan had started in 1982 and that only a year earlier an agreement on the time frame seemed highly doubtful, the understandings that had been reached were spectacular. But the understandings were perceived by the participants in the negotiations more as an anti-climax than as an accomplishment because it had already become apparent that a number of other hurdles needed to be overcome before the conclusion of the settlement.

When assessing with my colleagues the situation that we were facing, I told them that a perplexing reversal of attitudes and policies had undoubtedly taken place. But I was convinced that the United States would not allow the question of the new government to thwart a Soviet withdrawal. At the same time Washington was insisting that a settlement be conditional upon an agreement on symmetry. One week into the negotiations the prospects of a settlement seemed, to say the least, cloudy.

VI

I spent the weekend listening to shortwave radio reports about developments in Pakistan. Most suggested that the political parties that had been consulted were in favor of signing the settlement instruments. But when I met Noorani on Monday morning, March 7, he did not say anything about the business that had required his presence in Islamabad. It was only when I asked him a specific question that he said that no definite decision had been taken and that one was not expected before March 10 or 11. He once again reaffirmed that the May 15 date for the commencement of the Soviet withdrawal was "sacred."

Kozirev was quite upset when I told him that Noorani had said that no decision had been taken in Islamabad. "Why did he go, then?, he asked. After he ceased complaining about Pakistan's "machinations," I told him that we should look ahead and think of ways to overcome the difficulties that we were encountering. I suggested that we might consider drafting a document, which might be described as the "Final Act" of the negotiations, which would include the following provisions: (a) a statement to the effect that the settlement instruments had been finalized (and initialed?) and would enter into force on May 15; (b) a formal commitment by all concerned to sign the settlement instruments before the end of March; (c) a formal understanding that all concerned supported the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan, to be set up by the Afghans themselves, for which purpose I would "facilitate communication" and promote an intra-Afghan dialogue; (d) a formal undertaking not to change the "definitive" text of the settlement instruments, which would become an "annex" to the proposed Final Act; and (e) an understanding that signature of the settlement instruments would not be considered to be a formal recognition of any government. The last point had been repeatedly stressed by Pakistan and, according to Noorani, had been accepted by Vorontsov during his talks with Zia. A similar clause had been included in the Vietnam agreements signed in Paris.

While remaining strictly noncommittal concerning the possibility of accepting a Final Act, Kozirev readily raised objections to the provisions relating to the new Afghan government and to nonrecognition of the Kabul regime. He pointed out again that the formation of a new government was not within the purview of the negotiations and that the nonrecognition declaration could be made unilaterally by Pakistan and the United States.

Kozirev and Peck held their first private meeting that same day. It had been, apparently, very cordial, but the fact that it took place was not highly appreciated by either the Afghans or the Pakistanis. I thought that it was a very encouraging development. Peck told me later that at the meeting he had not raised the question of symmetry because he was not authorized to do so. Peck suspected that the Soviets were interested in a swift settlement in the expectation that Najibullah would remain in office and would gather increasing strength. It was for that reason, he added, that Washington attached so much importance to symmetry. I said that if that was the case I did not understand why it was not being discussed in Geneva.

All my efforts to finalize the documents during that week were futile.

Noorani and Wakil showed a consistent inclination to become enraged each time I suggested a new term or a different form of words to settle a pending issue. The positions on the border issue, and indeed on all other outstanding questions, seemed to have hardened, and the net result was that very little, if any, progress was made. Noorani and Wakil were exchanging charges and accusations not only during the negotiations but also at press conferences. Such public exchanges constituted a new, and potentially disruptive, development. Even Kozirev, always reserved and laconic, called a press conference. Many newspapers and TV reports started to talk about an unfolding impasse.

In the meantime I tried to organize the discussions on the two issues that in my view had the potential for creating a catastrophic deadlock: the formation of a new Afghan government and symmetry. During a pleasant lunch at the Hotel du Lac in Coppet, just outside Geneva, Peck told me categorically that Washington considered that the central issue was symmetry and not the formation of a new Kabul government. With equal emphasis Noorani and Sattar said that Islamabad felt that absolute priority should be given to concerted efforts to promote the formation of a new government. Kozirev was reluctant to consider either.

Noorani and Sattar approved enthusiastically the idea of a Final Act because they readily assumed that it would give Pakistan the additional time it was seeking. They insisted that it was essential to secure Soviet cooperation to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue. I told Noorani that the more he insisted on a formal undertaking by the Soviets, the more negative Kozirev became.

Noorani did not receive the instructions that he was expecting to get on March 10 or 11. (At one point he explained that he had received his instructions but that they had been subsequently canceled.) The second week of the negotiations ended in an atmosphere of utter frustration, and I decided to take off for a relaxing weekend in France.

A few minutes after my return to Geneva on Sunday evening, March 13, I received a telephone call from Kozirev, who had been trying to reach me since Saturday morning. (I did not know that he had my telephone number. Cathy had always assumed that the Soviets had it but would call me only if it was essential.) Kozirev, frantic and very concerned, said that he wanted to see me early on Monday morning to deliver an urgent message from Moscow.

The Soviet message was as straight as an arrow: "If the settlement instruments are not signed by March 15, the Soviet withdrawal would not start on May 15." And there was a somewhat intriguing addition, relating to symmetry: "In the Geneva documents there are no provisions which can be considered as a demand on the United States not to render assistance to the opposition in the territory of Pakistan—and we do not raise the question in such a way." (The obvious implication was that Washington would be free to continue assisting the resistance and that Moscow could continue assisting Kabul.) Kozirev also said that Moscow was evidently not willing to consider the idea of a Final Act. He seemed very tense, and I therefore decided not to discuss the Soviet message at that stage.

Noorani was adamant. He said that he could go as far as saying that Pakistan

would be ready to sign "during the month of March" if appropriate arrangements were made to take care of the concerns expressed by Islamabad, particularly on the question of the formation of a new Afghan government, the details of the withdrawal, and "disengagement." But he was not prepared, he added, to accept any threats from the Soviets. The withdrawal should commence on May 15, no matter what. Wakil, surprisingly relaxed and philosophical, told me over lunch at a Chinese restaurant that Pakistan was acting in typical "Eastern" fashion, that he personally believed that the settlement instruments would be signed before the end of the month, and that all concerned should be patient. Such soothing words, spoken twenty-four hours before Gorbachev's deadline, were most welcome after all the rigid attitudes that I had encountered that morning.

That afternoon's meetings, however, were as fruitless as those of the previous week. Noorani said that he intended to be as intransigent as Kozirev had been in a meeting with him. Wakil gave practical meaning to his lunch philosophy only to the extent of accepting the changes suggested by the resistance to the instrument on refugees. Peck came to my office in the evening to tell me that the Soviet message had also been delivered to Ambassador Matlock in Moscow. He said that the new Soviet argumentation concerning symmetry was not acceptable to the United States. Nothing short of a "moratorium" on military assistance would be acceptable, he said. Peck added that Pakistan had officially taken the position that it supported Washington's stance on symmetry and that all other issues could be settled without major difficulties.

Peck's assertion was confirmed by Zia himself. I received a telephone call from the President in my apartment at around 10:00 P.M. He assured me that "nobody" wanted to destroy the negotiations, that I should understand the difficulties that Pakistan was facing and help resolve them. My idea of a Final Act was "excellent." When I said that as a military officer he should understand the Soviets' reluctance to indicate at that stage the details of the withdrawal, he told me that he did indeed and that Kozirev's promise to provide such details to the U.N. monitoring teams was therefore satisfactory. Zia also agreed that the establishment of a new Afghan government should follow the conclusion of the settlement but that "we" should secure a Soviet undertaking to assist in that context. That was to be the first of many presidential phone calls, much to Noorani's annoyance.

When I reached my office on Tuesday, March 15, the day Gorbachev had fixed for the signing of the settlement instruments, I was told that Noorani and Wakil intended to make press statements. I told the assembled correspondents that we had run into serious difficulties but that all concerned were looking for solutions. "Afghanistan talks limp past deadline with key issues unresolved," said the *Christian Science Monitor* on March 16. Moscow's public dictum did not take long: "It is perfectly clear" a lengthy statement issued by Tass said, "that if the date of the signing of the agreements is put off, the beginning of the pullout of Soviet troops will be postponed too."[45] But Kozirev conveyed to the journalists the impression that what had happened was not the end of the world. He and Peck seemed to have concluded that the discussions about symmetry in Moscow

and Washington would be inconclusive and that we would have to wait until the meetings of Shevardnadze and Shultz in Washington ended on March 24. In the meantime, we in Geneva would have to mark time.

I spent the rest of the week trying to put at least a semblance of order in the negotiations. Much more businesslike discussions on the draft settlement instruments at long last took place, and it was possible to finalize all the documents except for the border issue, regarding which the two sides remained inflexible. Two days were devoted to "technical talks" between a lawyer from each delegation and Raymond Sommereyns to ascertain that all the texts were correct and that all the language versions (Russian, Urdu, and Pushtu) were carefully checked. Somebody in my staff described the exercise as "fine-tooth combing." Considerable time was also devoted to the technical details of the proposed monitoring arrangements.

Kozirev told me that Moscow had definitely ruled out the idea of a Final Act, mainly because the Soviet Union did not wish to endorse a document containing a statement of nonrecognition of the Kabul regime. I told him that Moscow should understand that, having taken a strong stand on the question of the formation of the government, Pakistan needed a face-saving device in order to sign the settlement instruments. I therefore suggested that I make a statement "on behalf of the participants in the negotiations" regarding the three issues that Pakistan had identified as requiring an endorsement by the Soviet Government—the formation of a new Afghan government, "disengagement," and the withdrawal details. Kozirev said that he was not prepared to engage in negotiations on such a text. If, however, I gave him a text that had been drafted by me and approved by Pakistan and the United States, he would send it to Moscow. We would have to see, he added, if Moscow said "da" or "nyet."

On the border issue Sattar first told me that Islamabad was willing to "meet the Afghans half way" to resolve it. Kozirev came to see me with his legal adviser and told me that Kabul was likewise willing "to meet the Pakistanis beyond half way." The Soviet legal adviser said that he failed to understand why Pakistan demanded a recognition of the Durand Line as the border by a government that it did not recognize. I suggested that there should be no change in the text and that the Afghans should make a "disclaimer" statement that would be included in the document. Wakil rejected the suggestion. Several other ideas proved equally unacceptable. Recalling that on a number of occasions Afghanistan had sent letters to the Secretary General complaining that Pakistani aircraft had violated Afghanistan's air space by crossing the Durand Line, I then asked Wakil if he would agree to replace the disputed words ("the existing internationally recognized boundaries") by "the Durand Line" in the text of the settlement. He again objected, arguing that the fact that Pakistani aircraft violated Afghan air space when they crossed the Durand Line did not mean that it was the border. The issue had by then become so sensitive and emotional that I did not dare question the explanation.

What was even more baffling was that Pakistan, too, rejected the proposal. At that point it seemed, in fact, that we had reached a dead end because Wakil

had told the press that Pakistan was trying to endanger "the whole Geneva process" by demanding Afghan recognition of the Durand Line as the legal border between the two countries. He had also said that the Government of India had taken the position that the border issue could not be discussed without its participation. (India had argued that Pakistan was trying to legitimize its occupation of the portion of Jammu and Kashmir—a forty-mile stretch—that, before Pakistani occupation, had had a common border with Afghanistan). It had been one of Wakil's most belligerent performances. "If the Pakistanis think that they can continue to organize a war against Afghanistan," he had said, "we have to tell them that the flames of war do not recognize any borders. Setting fire to your neighbor's house can spread the flames to your own home."[46]

Sattar told me that Islamabad had concluded that the mere inclusion of the controversial phrase in the settlement could not be deemed to constitute a recognition of the Durand Line as the border. That was why he had told me that he was ready to accept a compromise text. Wakil's statement and the Indian Government's threat to participate in the discussions had, however, made it politically impossible to accept a change. Sattar suspected that Wakil was trying to revive an emotional dispute that had in the past united all Afghans and would consequently strain relations between the Afghans in Peshawar and Islamabad. Apparently Wakil's move had also angered the Soviets. I organized a meeting between Kozirev and Sattar in the hope that the latter's congenial style might help reduce the tension.

But Kozirev evidently reported to his authorities that the negotiations were encountering major difficulties, and on March 17 Vadim Perfilyev, a spokesman for the Soviet Foreign Ministry, said at a news briefing that, if the impasse in the Geneva talks continued, "the withdrawal of the Soviet troops will be carried out in some other way." Perfilyev said that the Soviet Union remained committed to concluding a negotiated settlement but that Moscow "had made a decision to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan and we'll do that." "We'll do it ourselves," added Perfilyev. "We'll determine our own needs and our own forms of withdrawal." When I asked Kozirev if the "unilateral withdrawal threat" was real he seemed very annoyed. "Sure," he said, "in ten years." Press correspondents had yet another item to keep them busy.[47]

At the end of the third week of the negotiations I realized that it had been possible at least to narrow down the unresolved questions, which were essentially three: symmetry, the border issue, and the establishment of a new Afghan government. (After my talks with Zia I was convinced that Pakistan would be willing to drop the references to "disengagement" and the withdrawal details that were included in the draft of the statement that I had prepared.) But, in fact, the pivotal issue was symmetry. If there was agreement on symmetry, I told a group of correspondents who came for a background briefing in my office, the pressure on Pakistan to abandon its stand on the new Afghan government for a form of words that could mean anything would become overwhelming. The same, I was hoping, could apply to the border issue, but the emotional level of the discussions was deeply worrying.

VII

On the eve of Shevardnadze's arrival in Washington the *New York Times* published an editorial suggesting that if the Soviets wanted to get out of Afghanistan the U.S. Government "should do everything reasonable to help them to the exit." The *Times* asserted that, by demanding that Moscow halt all future aid to Kabul, Washington was "upping the ante" and asked: "Is this essential, or merely pandering to congressional pressure to toughen up the terms? Isn't it clear that Soviet troops, not Soviet arms, sustain the puppet regime?" The *Times* added:

> The declared aim of the accord negotiated by a U.N. intermediary is to end an occupation and guarantee Afghan nonaligment under whatever regime Afghans shape for themselves. This aim is achievable and legitimate. It could bring about the first retreat of Soviet forces in decades, shattering the Brezhnev Doctrine dogma that Communist takeovers are irreversible. It would vindicate the wisdom of U.S. aid to the Afghan resistance.[48]

Peck seemed fairly confident that Shultz and Shevardnadze would be able to reach an agreement on symmetry. Kozirev was uncertain because legal experts in Moscow had already described the agreement that the United States had proposed as a violation of a treaty on the provision of assistance to the Government of Afghanistan signed in 1921. "Whatever the U.S. thinks," he told me, "the regime in Kabul has all the attributes of a constitutional government, and we cannot undertake legal obligations not to provide assistance. Some people in Moscow are extremely rigid and legalistic." He then mumbled something to the effect that, if no assistance was provided to Kabul, the 1921 treaty would not be violated. Kozirev felt that Moscow was facing a legal conundrum. At one point he gave me implicit assurances that Kabul would receive generous amounts of military assistance before, but not after, the beginning of the Soviet withdrawal.

As we entered the fourth week of the negotiations on March 21, there was a growing feeling of suspense. I had to convince the press that we were still very busy completing the "technical" work required to prepare the settlement instruments for signature. Sommereyns concocted a number of significant compromise formulae regarding the kind of paper that would be used, the color of the ribbons, the "official" translation of various terms and the location of the signatures. (Pakistan refused to sign on the same page as Afghanistan). Pakistani delegates were clearly uncomfortable when press correspondents asked about the negotiations between the superpowers on matters of direct concern to their country. Noorani told me that the United States and the Soviet Union had "hijacked" the negotiations.

Late at night on Thursday, March 24, the Voice of America reported that no agreement had been reached in Washington on the question of symmetry. I had not met with Noorani and Wakil during the two preceding days, mainly because there was nothing to say, but as soon as I heard the news I decided to resume the discussions the next morning. I was determined to prevent a collapse of the negotiations.

At the meeting with Pakistan I made a rather dramatic speech stressing my conviction that the problem should be resolved in Geneva. I requested Islamabad's cooperation in the efforts that I was about to start in order to find a solution that would allow the settlement to be concluded. A gloomy Pakistani delegation looked very skeptical when I said that I intended to ask the United States and the Soviet Union to send high-level officials to Geneva for discussions with me. Noorani said that public opinion in his country did not understand what symmetry meant, much less that it could endanger the settlement.

I then invited Peck and Kozirev to my office for separate meetings with me. I told them that an agreement on symmetry had evidently become indispensable in order to conclude the settlement and that, although their Governments had wished to treat it as an issue to be negotiated between themselves, I felt duty-bound to seek a resolution as part of the Geneva process. I suggested that Armacost and Vorontsov should travel to Geneva for discussions with me during the weekend. I pointed out that if they (Kozirev and Peck) were authorized to deal with the problem I would be perfect happy but added that I assumed that Armacost and Vorontsov were more fully informed about all the preceding discussions. I also told them that if their Governments refused to make further efforts to solve the problem I would adjourn the negotiations. "Cordovez in Last-ditch Attempt to Save Afghan Discussions," said the *Financial Times* on March 25.

Peck told me the following day that Armacost would not be able to travel to Geneva but that he would be glad to discuss the situation with me if I agreed to use the "secure telephone" of the U.S. Embassy. Armacost wanted me to know that Washington had "not closed any doors" and would welcome any proposals that I might have in order to find a solution.

In order to show that I was determined to continue the negotiations, that same day I asked Nino Veronese, an official of the conference services department, to inform me of the arrangements that were being made for the signing of the settlement instruments. We made sure that the press was watching when we went to the Council Chamber, donated by the Spanish Republic in 1936 (it was called the Francisco de Vitoria Room after the Spanish jurist who was a major proponent of international law) to discuss furniture for the signing ceremony. On the way back to my office we walked with several correspondents who appeared either baffled or confused.

It was a very quiet Friday evening on March 25, when Peck came for a relaxed chat in my office. I told him that Kozirev had called to say that he was in bed with a cold but that obviously there was no news from Moscow. Peck and I then discussed several alternative ways to tackle the symmetry problem. He told me that Shultz had proposed in Washington a three-year moratorium on military assistance after the completion of the withdrawal, which had subsequently been reduced to one year and then to three months. Shevardnadze had shown consistent opposition to the concept of a moratorium and had suggested other ideas—all of which had been rejected by Shultz—intended to circumvent what Shevardnadze had described as very tricky legal difficulties. A working group chaired

by Armacost and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin had spent many hours trying to work out a mutually acceptable formula.

I told Peck what Kozirev had said about Soviet intentions for the post-withdrawal period and added that the Soviets were undoubtedly facing a legal problem that they viewed as insurmountable. I was hoping, I said, that if we were able to find a political solution we could help the Soviets overcome their difficulties by making mutually satisfactory arrangements concerning the publicity for an agreement on symmetry. It might be possible simply to inform the press that an agreement had been reached. Peck said that the Administration would have to inform Congress of the terms of the agreement. In passing he told me that, as he was leaving the White House after a farewell call on President Reagan, Shevardnadze had said that, having failed to reach an agreement on symmetry, the Soviet Union might withdraw its forces from Afghanistan on the basis of a tripartite agreement with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

On Sunday, March 27, Sattar called me to say that Kozirev had contacted him on Saturday to ask if Pakistan would agree to sign the settlement instruments without the guarantee of the United States. Kozirev had pointed out that he was not acting on instructions from Moscow and was merely trying to explore new ways of concluding the settlement in light of the failure to reach an agreement on symmetry. Sattar said that he himself and Noorani had rejected the idea but that he wanted me to know what Kozirev had said because evidently the Soviets were not willing to engage in further discussions about symmetry. Kozirev called me only a few minutes later to say that we ought to have an urgent meeting on Monday morning. Sattar called again late at night to say that he was worried and pessimistic.

On Monday morning Kozirev was quite tense and agitated. Moscow, he said, had definitely ruled out any further discussions on symmetry and urged that renewed efforts be made to settle the border issue. I said—with some hesitation, because I did not want to give him an opportunity to raise the question of a tripartite settlement—that the United States would insist on an agreement on symmetry but that I had been considering a number of ways of resolving that issue.

At that point Sattar joined us, and the three of us had a much more relaxed conversation. Sattar said that perhaps I could persuade the United States to make a unilateral statement on symmetry. He had mentioned the idea to me when he called on Sunday night, but I was surprised that he repeated it in front of Kozirev. Kozirev made no comment. Another possibility, I suggested, might be to make certain adjustments in the draft statement on "residual issues" which in connection with disengagement implicitly referred to symmetry. (The text that I had given to Kozirev provided that all sides would abstain "from any action which may not be explicitly referred to in the agreements but which nonetheless would be contrary to the spirit and objectives of the settlement.") Kozirev made no comment. Sattar also said that if there was an agreement on symmetry Pakistan would be flexible on the border issue. Kozirev said that if a minor adjustment was made in the text on the border he could persuade Wakil to accept it and to make a disclaimer statement. Sattar made no comment. I con-

cluded that all my interlocutors were eagerly exploring new ways and means of resolving the outstanding issues. It was indeed encouraging that, after Sattar joined us, Kozirev did not reiterate his Government's intention to discontinue the discussions about the symmetry problem.

Pakistan's position had undoubtedly evolved. Sattar told me that Junejo had been able to bring about a consensus of all the political parties in support of the settlement and that the consultations with the political parties had revealed an unusual degree of national unity behind the Government's efforts to resolve the Afghan conflict. But the Government had taken the position that it shared Washington's concern that the settlement should be preceded by an agreement on symmetry.

Sattar and I started to work much more closely together, and he became a source of invaluable advice in the closing days of the negotiations. I highly respected his character and his diplomatic skill. He assured me that, if we managed to persuade the Soviets and the Americans to reach an agreement on symmetry, neither the statement on residual questions nor the issues connected with the formation of a new Afghan government would pose great difficulties. Domestic pressure to conclude the settlement, Sattar said, had reached a "feverish pitch" in Pakistan.

I had gathered from news dispatches and from reports of diplomats posted in Islamabad that, to a large extent, the new attitude of Pakistan was the result of increasing disarray within the resistance. George Arney reported in the *Guardian* that "the usual shambles in the Peshawar alliance has degenerated to the level of farce."[49] At one point the resistance leaders had decided to send a delegation to Geneva, but two of them subsequently thwarted the move. Khalis said that the resistance leaders had given him "a bad headache" and resigned. He was replaced by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the most radical fundamentalist. There were rumors that the resistance would be moving to Iran and that tensions between the leaders and the Government were so high that President Zia had been forced to spend a whole night pacifying the leaders. Zia and Junejo had apparently been able to iron out most of their differences and had agreed that the resistance should be faced with the fact of the Soviet withdrawal.

On Monday, March 28, the beginning of the fifth week of the negotiations, Peck came to my office but had very little to say. He stressed that he was ready to talk about symmetry but that he had not received any "guidance" from Washington. Should I suspend the negotiations, I asked. Peck first said that a suspension might be useful but then promised to call Washington again.

Peck's attitude did not surprise me. I had been told that Shultz, Armacost, and Peck were all in favor of continuing the efforts to reach a symmetry agreement but that there was strong opposition from other quarters. Shultz had decided to consult the President on the position that the United States should take but was still waiting for an opportunity to do so.

In the circumstances I decided to prepare my own draft of an agreement on symmetry. At a time when the situation in Geneva was becoming desperate and even farcical, because nobody knew why we were still there, the existence of a text might, I hoped, force Washington and Moscow to abandon their reticence. I

first showed the draft to Sattar, who felt that "it could fly." According to Sattar, that same day Vorontsov had called in the Ambassador of Pakistan in Moscow to tell him that the Soviet Union was firmly opposed to any further discussions on symmetry and that if Washington refused to sign the settlement—before March 31, Moscow would invite Islamabad and Kabul to sign a trilateral settlement. There was very little time left.

In the draft that I prepared, the United States and the Soviet Union would reaffirm "the sovereign right of all States to assist other States in pursuance of international agreements" but, as guarantors of the settlement, would likewise reaffirm that it would be essential to its effective implementation that all concerned "should exercise restraint in taking any actions which may be deemed to be at variance" with the settlement. The two guarantors would further express "their conviction that the conditions for peace [in Afghanistan] could not be attained if actions were to be taken which would tend to fuel hostilities and therefore prompt commensurate reactions."

Peck's first reaction was positive. He had evidently been feeling uncomfortable with Washington's silence and welcomed my paper as a way of shaking things up. I know that when he sent the draft to Washington he recommended approval. Sattar told me that Junejo had called in Arny Raphel to urge flexibility on the question of symmetry and that Raphel had described my paper, which Peck had received only a couple of hours earlier, as very "opportune and adequate." (Junejo was furious with his delegation in Geneva because the paper had not reached him when he met Raphel. The fax machine was beginning to have an impact on diplomacy!)

Peck told me that, given the difficulties in Washington and the fact that a statement by Shultz noting that the American proposal on symmetry "was still on the table" had been issued with Reagan's approval, a decision on my proposal would also be submitted to the President. That would probably take time. Kozirev said that he needed to know if the proposal had been accepted by Washington because Moscow was not prepared to resume negotiations on symmetry with the United States. "Moment of Truth Nears on Afghanistan," said Don Oberdorfer and David Ottaway in an article published in the *International Herald Tribune* on March 26. That same day David Ottaway reported in the *Washington Post* that the Reagan Administration was ending the supply of Stingers to the Afghan resistance "in anticipation of a peace settlement in Afghanistan." Sattar told me that Zia and Junejo had telephoned Reagan and Shultz to urge that my paper be accepted.

Those were unnerving days. Shultz was scheduled to travel to the Middle East, and Reagan was leaving for a holiday in California. Although Kozirev maintained that Moscow was opposed to reopening negotiations on symmetry, he kept asking if all the texts of the settlement instruments were ready and was also pressing Sattar to settle the question of the border "just in case Cordovez's ideas are accepted." Sattar had the impression that Moscow was very seriously considering my paper, if only because it had the effect of abandoning the concept of a "moratorium" that had created the legal problems leading to the Washington collapse. By switching from "negative" to "positive" symmetry, Sattar ar-

gued, the paper would give the Soviet Union a dignified, as well as a very practical, way out.

I was in the middle of a conversation with Kozirev when Peck called and, speaking rather solemnly, said: "I am authorized to inform you that the United States Government accepts your proposal as it stands." Kozirev repeated that his Government remained very reluctant to resume any discussions on symmetry, but it was obvious that he personally felt that the message from Washington was helpful. He rushed back to his office to inform Moscow.

Peck subsequently told me that it was essential to get a quick answer from the Soviets because the President's decision had been "leaked," and he expected a strong reaction from members of Congress who opposed the settlement. Kozirev said that there was nothing he could do but wait. He, too, I think, had recommended approval. One of my problems was to keep Wakil relatively calm by reviewing again and again all the suggestions that had been made to settle the border issue. Noorani and Sattar said that their Ambassador in Moscow had been instructed to inform Vorontsov that Islamabad would show flexibility on all pending issues if symmetry was resolved. On March 31, a very grim Kozirev entered my office. He opened his notebook and read slowly the text of a message that he had received from Moscow. It was negative.

VIII

The negotiations had been unfolding in such a way that failure to reach agreement on symmetry could only prompt their immediate breakdown. That this did not happen attests to the determination of the United States and the Soviet Union to bring about a settlement of the Afghan conflict. I would like to think that the Geneva process, particularly the last weeks of negotiations, had also generated a degree of mutual confidence that allowed Moscow and Washington to proceed on the basis of bilateral understandings and not of a formal agreement.

I had seen a play on Broadway—*A Walk in the Woods*—that was based upon the famous conversation that took place in July 1982 between American disarmament negotiator Paul Nitze and Soviet negotiator Yuli Kvitsinsky while they were walking—but in fact mostly sitting on a log—in the Swiss Jura mountains. It had fascinated me because it was a very clever way of describing what went on in such sensitive negotiations. A few weeks after the Geneva accords were signed, I decided to try to write something similar to explain the problem that the superpowers had faced when symmetry was being discussed, as well as the understandings that I believe were reached in order to enable the Geneva process to continue to its successful conclusion. As in *A Walk in the Woods,* my "script" was based upon real conversations of which I was informed or in which I was a participant, but many segments were conjectural and represented essentially my own presumption, speculation, and supposition about what might have been said.

I decided that the "dialogue" between "Sam" and "Ivan" should take place

during a walk around Lake Geneva because I knew that Peck and Kozirev met several times after Kozirev brought the negative message from his Government, but, in fact, some of the exchanges took place in Moscow and Washington. This is my "Fictional Dialogue about Symmetry Walking around the Lake":

SAM: Well, my dear Ivan, it seems that the Geneva negotiations are now moving towards a settlement on Afghanistan. But there is a serious problem: Najibullah is still there, and our position is that we consider his regime as just one of the factions in the Afghan civil conflict. We therefore feel that the settlement would be totally unbalanced if we undertake to stop our assistance to the *mujahideen* on May 15 while you can continue to give military aid to Najib and his boys. . . . Our obligations and our future behavior should be symmetrical.

IVAN: We will give them food, not arms.

SAM: Let me make a note of that. That sounds O.K. to us.

IVAN: No, no. No notes or anything like that. You see, my dear Sam, "Najib and his boys" have all the attributes of a constitutional Government. If we formally and explicitly undertake to stop our assistance we would violate an agreement, a treaty, that the Soviet Government signed with the Government of Afghanistan in 1921. One thing is not to provide military assistance to Afghanistan for a period of time; an entirely different matter is to commit ourselves, formally, to stop our aid. One thing is what we do in practical terms; another is what we undertake in a formal agreement to do, or not to do. Those who are opposed to this settlement—there are still many people in Moscow who are against the withdrawal of our "limited contingent" from Afghanistan—would say that for the sake of reaching a settlement we are willing to violate long-standing treaty obligations.

SAM: We are not suggesting that you violate your legal obligations. We are proposing a moratorium on the delivery of arms during an agreed-upon period of time—say, one year. Actually, six months, even three months, would do. I don't see any problem.

IVAN: Of course there is a problem. But only in a formal sense. It is in fact the *formality* of a moratorium—or whatever you want to call it—that creates a problem. That is why we rejected Cordovez's paper, which is much more subtle than yours. We agree with the substance of it, but we cannot agree to anything that implies that in our relations with Afghanistan we will not act in conformity with a treaty. We will, in fact, observe those same treaty obligations with any future Government that might be established in Afghanistan. We always did, even during the monarchy!!

SAM: Should I understand that what you are saying is that you will, in fact, stop all deliveries of arms on May 15 but that you cannot accept a formal undertaking to that effect? That would be fine with us—but what do we tell people in the U.S. Congress who are accusing us of selling out "the Moodge"? Remember that we, too, have people who are opposed to the settlement.

IVAN: You can tell them what you want. We have to tell Najib and our own people that we do not sign treaties and then commit ourselves, in a legal text, to do, or not to do, something in violation of such treaties.

SAM: If that is your position we will have to make a formal statement at the time of signing the Geneva Accords to the effect that we reserve our right to provide assistance to "the Moodge" if you provide military aid to Najib. I hope that you will not misunderstand that statement—it will essentially say that we are prepared to meet restraint with restraint. That is the only way in which we can go along with the settlement.

IVAN: Look, don't try to pin me down. I already told you: You can say what you want. You know what your obligations will be under the settlement. Both of us have accepted to serve as Guarantors; we have accordingly agreed to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Geneva Accords. As Cordovez says, any action that may have the effect of fueling hostilities would constitute a violation of the Accords. What we say, or what you say, publicly is irrelevant. What is important is what we both do to end the mess in Afghanistan. I think that "the international community" expects both of us to help put an end to this tragic situation.

SAM: Understood. But I still have to live with the problem that we have with our Congress. I therefore have to say that we have reached some sort of agreement or understanding. I should be able to say that we have not abandoned the resistance, that we will continue to help them. We will have to send you a letter to that effect. I will draft it in such a way as to get an answer from you that we can use.

IVAN: As I said before, you can say what you want. I don't know what you mean by "an agreement or understanding." I told you that any *formal* deal is out of the question. If you send us a letter notifying us of your intention to make a statement at the time of signing the Accords we will consider how to answer it—and if you make a statement we will have to make another one. If it is essential for you to say that you will continue to help *your* boys, it will be equally necessary for us to say that we respect our international obligations, and that we do not drop *our* boys just like that.

SAM: O.K., we will send you a letter. The press will say that we have switched from *negative* symmetry to *positive* symmetry. We will handle the problems that may arise as we see fit. You put us in a difficult situation at a time when we are doing our very best to have a settlement.

IVAN: You pay too much attention to the press. Let them say what they want, and let them coin as many new terms as they want. They should understand that there is something called "tacit diplomacy" involving implicit understandings. You Americans always act like narrow-minded lawyers, who love papers, documents, and explicit agreements. Ever since we took the political decision to withdraw—and I can assure that it was not easy, just remember your own agony in Vietnam—because the Geneva process made that decision palatable, you have raised difficulties and obstacles. Can you not take "yes" for an answer? Yes, we want to get out of Afghanistan. And, yes, we will withdraw! Even the Pakistanis are now convinced!!

SAM: It is getting late. Let us tell Cordovez that we have reached an understanding on symmetry and that he should tackle the issues that are outstanding without delay.

IVAN: Yes, but we have to be helpful. The press has the impression that the negotiations are moribund, and we should all make an effort to solve those pending issues. I will see how to persuade the Afghans to show greater flexibility on the border issue, which seems to be extremely sensitive, and you should tell the Pakistanis to do likewise. It won't be easy. And we should just forget about the famous statement on the residual issues. It will not serve any purpose.

SAM: I thought that you did not care about what the press says!! Yes, we will talk to the Pakistanis about the border, although we don't like to meddle on that kind of issue. One usually gets into trouble. I am sure that Pakistan will insist on a statement on the new government, mainly to endorse the understanding reached in Washington by Shultz and Shevardnadze to request Cordovez to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue.

IVAN: I don't think that Cordovez wants that formally recorded. International officials are not supposed to become involved in government-formation activities, although I believe that at one point he considered proclaiming himself as the new ruler of Afghanistan and thus solve the problem with a "neutral" formula!! We can talk about all that tomorrow. Good night, Sam.
SAM: Good night, Ivan.

IX

April 1 was Good Friday. I therefore informed my interlocutors that we would not be holding any formal meetings until Monday, April 4. During the weekend I was, however, in touch with Peck, Kozirev, and Sattar. I also prepared a revised version of the statement on residual issues, which I decided, in consultation with Sattar, should refer only to the question of the formation of the new government. Although I had been officially informed that Shultz and Shevardnadze had agreed in Washington that I should promote, in my "personal capacity," an intra-Afghan dialogue, I refused to refer in the draft to my own role because at that stage it might have been considered by "strict constructionists" to be an unacceptable departure from the U.N. Charter provisions regarding the behavior and duties of international officials.

Peck told me that the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow had been instructed to deliver a letter concerning symmetry to Vorontsov. The text, he said, was based essentially upon the paper that I had prepared and was intended to serve as a notification to the Soviet Union that Washington would "meet restraint with restraint." The question was whether the Soviet Union would consider the letter of notification as an attempt to secure its consent—and therefore as yet another effort to formalize an agreement. Vorontsov had twice telephoned the Chargé to say that the letter was under careful consideration at a very high level.

On Sunday, April 3, Kozirev rung me up to say that Shevardnadze was flying to Kabul for a "working visit." No specific reasons or purposes had been mentioned in the official announcement of the trip, he told me, and he himself could not offer any explanation. The *New York Times* carried the following day a report from Moscow which said in part: "At Kabul airport, Mr. Shevardnadze said the Geneva talks had encountered 'serious difficulties' because of American and Pakistani demands. 'In this connection,' he said, 'it is necessary to discuss and coordinate with the Afghan leadership the various options for action, in all their aspects, in the event that the Geneva process fails to bring about the desired results'."[50]

Sattar feared that the Soviets might have decided to consult Najibullah before replying to the U.S. letter. (Pakistan no longer considered Najibullah a "malleable puppet.") I am sure that there was, at that time, considerable tension between Moscow and Kabul and that several alternatives, including the idea of concluding the settlement without the United States, were considered. "The circumstances seemed strongly reminiscent of the arm-twisting that President

Nixon and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger had to do on their nervous ally in Saigon, Nguyen Van Thieu, when the United States finally decided to get out of Vietnam," wrote Craig R. Whitney in the *New York Times*.[51]

But after a long conversation with Kozirev I concluded that the Soviets had simply decided that it would be wise for the Foreign Minister to personally inform Najibullah that the symmetry issue had been resolved and that the settlement would be ready for signature if the border question was settled. Kozirev had been unable to appease Wakil and expected that Shevardnadze would be able to persuade Najibullah to reach an accommodation with Pakistan.

The statement made by Shevardnadze on his arrival in Kabul had naturally given the impression that the negotiations were on the verge of collapsing. On Monday, April 4, we therefore started the sixth week of the negotiations in an atmosphere of lassitude and pessimism. After many years in which the representatives of the superpowers had tried to keep a very low profile, they seemed to have taken over. Paul Lewis reported in the *New York Times* that Kozirev and Peck were "shuttling in and out of the office of Diego Cordovez" as if my meetings with Noorani and Wakil had become entirely irrelevant.[52]

Kozirev, Peck, and Sattar decided that we should try to resolve the border issue. Kozirev told me that Noorani had said in a conversation that Pakistan was not seeking recognition of the Durand Line and that accordingly Islamabad intended to propose negotiations on the border to the new Kabul government. Wakil told me that he would accept nothing short of the complete elimination of the four words that had created the problem. At one point Sattar asked me to try the "Simla formula" by which India and Pakistan had been able to solve a similar difficulty in 1972, but Wakil rejected it outright.

Suddenly, on Tuesday, April 5, everything seemed to have changed. Nothing said or done led me to that conclusion. It was, rather, the way in which all my interlocutors were acting that led me to believe that the "choreography" of the settlement was, imperceptibly, giving way to the "chemistry" of the settlement. All the actors seemed to behave as if impelled by magical forces in the direction of a predetermined goal.

We tried again, without any success, a number of new ideas to solve the border issue. Kozirev told me that the situation in Kabul was equally difficult because Najibullah was as intransigent as Wakil. Peck told me that Vorontsov had told the U.S. Chargé in Moscow that Washington should press Pakistan on the border issue "because if we can solve that question we have a deal." I told Kozirev that I would not make any further suggestions to Wakil because he had again said that the issue was outside my mandate. I wanted to avoid a major institutional confrontation, but a solution was possible, I said, if the Soviets made a formal proposal. I suggested that they try again the Simla formula, which Sattar had been willing to accept, according to which India and Pakistan had undertaken to respect a line "without prejudice to the recognized position of either side."

Kozirev kept asking me all sorts of questions concerning the formalities for the conclusion of the settlement and agreed that the withdrawal would start on

May 15, as announced by Gorbachev, notwithstanding the delay in the signing of the settlement instruments. Shevardnadze reported from Moscow that Najibullah had accepted the text of the statement on the formation of a new government. "Prospects suddenly brightened Tuesday in the U.N.-sponsored negotiations for a settlement in Afghanistan," wrote a perceptive Alan Mcgregor in the *Christian Science Monitor.*[53]

Kozirev and Sattar informed me that in Moscow Vorontsov had called in the Pakistani Ambassador and had formally made two suggestions to solve the border issue: to delete the whole paragraph or to replace the problem words by "so as not to violate each other's borders." President Zia rung me up to assure me that Pakistan did not wish the border question to become a "stumbling block" and to inform me that he was inclined to accept the second Soviet suggestion provided that the word "international" was added before the word "borders." (Subsequently Pakistan withdrew the idea of adding the word "international.")

It had been a long day, but when I finally went to bed I was convinced that the settlement was about to be concluded. Symmetry had suddenly disappeared from the scene, and a sustained effort was evidently under way to resolve the border issue. We had gradually isolated that problem in the same way that the withdrawal time frame had earlier been identified as the key outstanding question. What the press and political analysts consistently underestimate is the amount of work and effort required in such situations. Here are the log notes prepared by Cathy that day, in which I felt that we had turned towards the final stretch:

10:30	Messrs. Kozirev and Siddorsky	
11:40	DC phoned Mr. Peck	
12:00	Mr. Sattar	
12:20	DC phoned Mr. Peck	
12:30	Iranian Ambassador	
12:30	Mr. Kozirev	
Lunch	British Ambassador (La Réserve)	
15:15	Mr. Peck, unannounced	
15:30	Pakistan (Proximity talks, Salon Français)	
16:00	Afghanistan (Proximity talks, Room I)	
17:30	Mr. Kozirev	(Mr. Sommereyns [technical work] meets:
		17:15 Mr. Arbogast
		18:15 Mr. Riaz Khan
		19:00 Mr. Mr. Roshanrawan)
18:00	Mr. Sattar	
18:40	Mr. Kozirev phoned	
18:45	DC phoned Mr. Sattar	
19:15	Mr. Kozirev	
20:00	Mr. Paul Lewis (the *New York Times*) phoned	

20:00 Mr. Ahmed Rashid (the *Independent,* London)
24:00 President Zia phoned DC from Islamabad
01:00 Mr. Kozirev returned DC's call

On Wednesday, April 6, Messrs. Gorbachev, Najibullah, and Shevardnadze arrived in Tashkent, and Senator Gordon Humphrey arrived in Geneva. The unscheduled "summit" meeting in Soviet Central Asia, 190 miles north of the Soviet-Afghan border, was apparently necessary because Najibullah had demanded that all the understandings reached with Shevardnadze be personally endorsed by the President of the Soviet Union and because the Afghan leadership was still wavering with respect to the Soviet proposal regarding the border. Senator Humphrey came to Geneva in a last-minute attempt to disrupt the negotiations. He convened a press conference at which he said that during a visit to Pakistan he had ascertained that there had been a reduction of U.S. assistance to the resistance "not as a result of any scheme to pressure" the *mujahideen* but as a result of "technical problems and some planning errors" that were "being cleared up." (U.S. Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci was in Islamabad.) Humphrey added that he and other members of the Senate were concerned about "the terms of the Geneva agreements as they are shaping up." He had written a letter to President Reagan, he said, informing him that the resistance was opposed to the settlement.

In a joint statement issued on Thursday, April 7, Gorbachev and Najibullah asserted that "the last obstacles to concluding the agreements have now been removed" and advocated "their immediate signing."[54] Wakil, however, had either not been informed that his President had accepted the new language on the border or was refusing to obey. Kozirev was desperate. He came to see me in the morning to complain that everything and everybody was ready for the signing of the settlement instruments but that Wakil was still refusing to budge. He hurried back to Wakil's hotel for further discussions and three hours later came back to report that the situation remained unchanged. He told me with a sigh of relief that Vorontsov would be arriving in Geneva in the early afternoon.

Kozirev asked me again if all the documents were "typed." He seemed so nervous that I decided to give him a demonstration of a very sophisticated computer that had been leased by the U.N. Cathy entered a secret password, and the machine started to print the settlement documents in all the languages. Kozirev was amazed; he evidently had never seen anything like that. He rushed to the airport to meet Vorontsov.

Vorontsov and Wakil spent many hours together at the Soviet Mission to the U.N. Kozirev called me very late at night (by then everybody was calling everybody at any time) to say that there was no agreement but that I should promise him that I would convene a formal meeting with Wakil just as soon as he had agreed to the new text.

On Friday morning, April 8, Kozirev called me at home to say that Wakil was ready. I told him that my staff would arrange a formal meeting at the Palais des Nations within an hour. Wakil was a very tired and distressed man when he walked down the corridor towards the Salon Français. He told me that after a

long and agonizing consideration of the proposal that I had made, the Afghan Government had decided to accept it in order that a settlement designed to bring peace to his country could be concluded. I readily realized that he had decided to assign to me the authorship of the proposal in order not to appear subservient to the Soviet Union and to give a more dignified mantle to what he obviously considered to be a deeply humiliating situation. I thanked him for his cooperation and commended the patriotic spirit with which he had consistently worked to bring about a political solution of the Afghan conflict. I then escorted him to his car.

At 12:50 P.M. I announced in the press center that all the settlement instruments were ready and open for signature. I said that I was absolutely convinced that all concerned had been trying, over a period of six years, to work out not just any settlement but the best possible settlement. I added that it provided the Afghan people an historic opportunity to achieve peace and that I expected the Afghan people to take advantage of that opportunity with a sense of responsibility. I then read out the statement on the new government, which had been agreed upon as follows:

> I am authorized at this time to state that throughout the negotiations it has been consistently recognized that the objective of a comprehensive settlement implies the broadest support and immediate participation of all segments of the Afghan people and that this can best be ensured by a broad-based Afghan Government. It was equally recognized that any questions relating to the Government of Afghanistan are matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of Afghanistan and can only be decided by the Afghan people themselves. The hope was therefore expressed that all elements of the Afghan nation, living inside and outside Afghanistan, would respond to this historic opportunity. At this crucial stage, all concerned will therefore promote the endeavors of the Afghan people to work out arrangements for a broad-based Government and will support and facilitate that process.

"It would have been good to nail down a new government and seal off all arms," said the *Washington Post* in an editorial on April 10. "But the first and rightful objective of the U.N. as of American diplomacy has always been to get the Soviets out." On April 9 the Soviet Union had sent a reply on the symmetry question to the United States in a letter delivered to the American Embassy in Moscow. The first reaction in Washington was that the Soviet response signaled assent to the American compromise proposal but did not specifically mention "positive symmetry." "It is somewhat oblique and refers to conversations that have been held and understandings that have been reached," said a senior Administration official.[55] There were a number of reports that the Soviet letter was being carefully studied in Washington. On April 11 President Reagan made a formal announcement in the Rose Garden of the White House. "I believe," he said, "that the U.S. can now join the Soviet Union as a guarantor of the Geneva instruments." The President also announced that Secretary of State Shultz would go to Geneva to participate in the signing ceremony.[56]

The Geneva accords were signed on Thursday, April 14, by Noorani and Wakil and, on behalf of the guarantor governments, by Shultz and Shevardnadze. The proceedings, which were presided over by Pérez de Cuéllar, had

been carefully organized and rehearsed with representatives of the four countries. After the Pakistanis refused to meet with the Afghans, as prescribed in one of the Notes for the Record, the two foreign ministers entered the Council Chamber through opposite doors. They exchanged only furtive glances and appeared to find of more interest the Chamber frescoes painted with gold leaf and sepia ink by José Maria Sert of Barcelona, the same artist who decorated Rockefeller Center in New York. Shultz and Shevardnadze, who had exchanged greetings before entering the Chamber, seemed much less tense and uncomfortable. As agreed in advance, only the Secretary General made a brief statement. The frosty ceremony resembled a funeral service, even more so because my female assistants were in tears. It was over in about twenty minutes.

"History has been made today," said Secretary of State Shultz after the ceremony. In a formal statement he pointed out that "the obligations undertaken by the guarantors are symmetrical." "In this regard," he added, "the United States has advised the Soviet Union that the U.S. retains the right, consistent with its obligations as a Guarantor, to provide military assistance to parties in Afghanistan. Should the Soviet Union exercise restraint in providing military assistance to parties in Afghanistan, the U.S. similarly will exercise restraint."[57] "The Soviet side," said Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, "is convinced that the rights and obligations of the parties to the Geneva agreements, including the U.S.S.R. and the United States as guarantors, clearly follow from the texts of those agreements."[58]

As I left Geneva I was more tired than excited, nothing like the way I felt when Gorbachev made the withdrawal announcement on February 8 or when, on April 5, I sensed that movement toward a settlement was irreversible.

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EPILOGUE

THE WITHDRAWAL AND AFTER

Diego Cordovez

- *UNGOMAP comes into being (April 1988)*
- *A telephone call from President-Elect Rodrigo Borja*
- *In Jalalabad Soviet troops begin the withdrawal process*
- *A U.N. proposal for a "broad-based government of Afghanistan"*
- *Zia fires Junejo and Najibullah sacks Sultan Ali Keshtmand*
- *In Teheran a talk with the Mujahideen*
- *Arny Raphel says military assistance has stopped*
- *A Talk with General of the Army Valentin Varennikov*
- *Najibullah is not annoyed when I suggest that he step down*
- *My last talk with President Zia*
- *I fly to Quito and become the Foreign Minister of Ecuador*
- *President Zia dies in a plane crash*
- *A failed "shura" and two interim governments which do not take off*
- *Pérez de Cuéllar revives the U.N. proposal*
- *The U.N.'s job is now done. The world has no business in Afghan tribal disputes and blood feuds*

ST. PETERSBURG. The Novoe Vremya today publishes a report to the effect that the whole of Northern Afghanistan has revolted from the authority of Abdurrahman, and has acknowledged Ishak Khan as Ameer. A civil war in Afghanistan may complicate the Ameer's relations with neighboring States especially if not promptly suppressed by Abdorrahman, a result which the journal considers more than doubtful.

"100 Years Ago,"
International Herald Tribune,
7 September 1988

I

My immediate concern when I returned to New York after the signing of the Geneva accords was to set in motion the monitoring arrangements that had been agreed upon to ensure the effective implementation of the accords. With his usual dexterity General Dibuama took all the required steps for the establishment of what we decided to call the "United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan," which implied the addition of yet another acronym—UNGOMAP—to the U.N. "alphabet soup." General Helminen, the military head of the mission, was instructed to proceed to Islamabad and Kabul with a small advance party of military and civilian officials to organize the two headquarters units.[1]

During the Geneva negotiations, any involvement of the Security Council in the formalities for the conclusion of the settlement had been rejected as utterly unacceptable by Kabul, with the unreserved support of the Soviets, on the ground that it would give an undesirable and unjustified "international dimension" to the Afghan conflict. Surprisingly, the Soviet Ambassador did not object when some Western members of the Security Council requested the texts of the accords before approving the redeployment of military officers from existing peacekeeping operations to UNGOMAP. It was a good indication of changed attitudes and circumstances.

I was only concerned that the good offices character of UNGOMAP not be challenged. A number of Western members, as well as some Secretariat mandarins, had taken the position that it was necessary to follow the standard U.N. procedures for the establishment of peacekeeping operations. That was, in my view, an attempt to curtail the authority of the Secretary General to provide his good offices to member States and to introduce limitations through the practical means available to him for that purpose. Islamabad and Kabul, as well as Moscow and Washington, had expressly agreed that UNGOMAP would have fairly broad mediation functions; a peacekeeping operation would not necessarily have such functions unless it was so agreed in connection with a specific problem. Long discussions were held in the office of the Council's President, and the Secretary General was then informed of the Council's "provisional" agreement to set up UNGOMAP "pending formal consideration and decision by the Council later."[2] On October 31 the Council adopted a formal resolution, which was followed by other decisions in 1989 and 1990, none of which cast doubts on the good offices character of the operation.[3]

At a luncheon sponsored by the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA), Pérez de Cuéllar said that, having received the "green light" from the Security Council, he wanted to announce "that I have had the pleasure of appointing my friend and colleague, Mr. Cordovez, who is a man of not only great skill but also of endurance and patience and perseverance, to be my representative for the implementation of the agreements which he negotiated over the years."[4] A few days later the Secretary General also announced the appointment of Sadruddin Aga Khan as coordinator for U.N. humanitarian and economic assistance programs relating to Afghanistan.[5]

The first reports that I received from General Helminen indicated that he had encountered a number of difficulties in Islamabad, owing to Government delays in the provision of logistical facilities and local services. In Kabul General Helminen found that arrangements for all facilities and accommodation had already been made. An Austrian Colonel headed the Islamabad headquarters unit and a Swedish Colonel headed the Kabul headquarters unit. Both were instructed to stay at their posts while all other military observers ("Milobs," in the vernacular of the U.N.) were to be "highly mobile" so as to be able to verify any violations of the accords.

On Sunday, May 8, I listened until past midnight to the election returns in my home country. Rodrigo Borja was elected President and, based on "strong rumors" circulating in Quito before election day, I anticipated that toward the end of July, when a new President customarily makes his cabinet appointments, he would call to ask me to join his administration as Foreign Minister. However, two days later I was in the middle of a meeting in my office when Cathy handed me a message that read: "The President is on the line." Borja spoke as if he took it for granted that I would be his Foreign Minister. I said that I wanted to talk it over with him and that I would travel to Quito for that purpose. I told Pérez de Cuéllar that if I decided to return to the service of my country I would be able, if he so wished, to continue as his Representative until the completion of the monitoring operation. Pérez de Cuéllar said that the news of my possible appointment had not come as a surprise to him and that he had always intended to ask me to remain in charge of the Afghan mission.

I spent three days in Quito and began what was to develop as a most interesting and rewarding working relationship with my President. My appointment as Foreign Minister was announced simultaneously in Quito and in New York, and I then proceeded to Geneva for a meeting that I had convened to review the setting in motion of the monitoring arrangements. General Helminen and Abdul Sattar were already there, but Kabul chose not to send any representative, presumably to emphasize the fact that all the arrangements were already in place in Afghanistan.

I told Sattar that, besides the difficulties that UNGOMAP was having with regard to logistical arrangements, I was concerned about the accusations that Kabul and the Soviets had already made about Pakistan's failure to comply with its noninterference obligations. I pointed out that Shevardnadze had already sent a letter, which had been circulated as a U.N. document. "Before the ink on the signatures to the Geneva documents was even dry, statements began to be heard which contradicted the spirit and the letter of the agreements," Shevardnadze had said.[6] Sattar assured me that all the problems that we were facing were exclusively of a bureaucratic nature and assured me that Pakistan was determined to implement the Geneva accords in good faith.

General Helminen subsequently reported that on May 15, the day the accords entered into force, ten U.N. military officers were present at the early morning ceremony in Jalalabad when the first group of Soviet troops started the withdrawal process by evacuating a camp that was turned over to the Afghan authorities. These troops proceeded via Kabul to Khairkhana and Khairatan and

crossed the border on May 19 under U.N. supervision. I heard the news with special satisfaction because I considered that the Soviet withdrawal would always be considered as the only real test of the validity and effectiveness of the Geneva accords. When the departing troops reached the Soviet side of the border, Marina Saikova, the wife of a young lieutenant, sobbing uncontrollably in a stand overlooking the parade of returning soldiers, said: "I am weeping tears of happiness, not because I have lost anyone but because I am joyful beyond words because the soldiers have now started to come home."[7]

General of the Army Valentin Varennikov, who was in charge of all withdrawal operations, had informed General Helminen of all the relevant modalities and had provided assurances that U.N. monitors would be able to exercise their functions without any restrictions. General Helminen was convinced that the Soviet withdrawal would proceed smoothly and that the allegations made by Kabul about Pakistan's violations were symptomatic of the difficulties that were to be expected to arise in the initial stages of the implementation of a complex set of international agreements. But I was worried that a continuation of Afghan and Soviet allegations might disrupt the withdrawal process.

II

Having ascertained that the Soviet withdrawal had started, I turned my attention to the other major task that the signatories of the Geneva accords had entrusted to me: the promotion of consultations and negotiations toward the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan.

I conceived my role essentially as that of a catalyst and felt very strongly that all efforts should be based upon two basic premises of the accords: that complete foreign disengagement in the affairs of Afghanistan should be achieved as soon as possible and, accordingly, that all decisions regarding the future government should be taken by the Afghans themselves. I also felt that, in order to secure a degree of interest and, I hoped, success, all the suggestions that might be made to promote an intra-Afghan dialogue should conform to the traditional decision-making procedures that the Afghans had always relied upon to resolve their differences. I had been repeatedly reminded by many Afghans that for more than a hundred years their country had been afflicted by periodic internal strife and that the Afghans themselves had developed effective means to overcome crisis situations.

All my talks with Afghans also led me to conclude that my efforts would be particularly useful if I was able to persuade Najibullah to step down. An intra-Afghan dialogue could start, I had been told, only if all the participants were on an equal footing. If the Soviet withdrawal was the first requirement for the solution of the Afghan conflict, the continuation of a regime set up by the occupying power would be seen by a vast majority of Afghans as an intolerable obstacle. Inasmuch as the resistance leaders and field commanders did not recognize the legitimacy of Najibullah's government, military operations against Kabul and other cities under his control might continue.

At the time I did not know the Soviets' position regarding Najibullah. Whenever I raised the issue, they restated their well-known argument that his regime had "all the attributes of a constitutional government." I told them in unmistakable terms that it was as wrong to try to impose Najibullah's government as it would be to try to impose a government of the *mujahideen.* It was essential, I told all my Soviet interlocutors, to set in motion a process that would allow the Afghan people freely to choose their government. Only a government perceived by all Afghans as legitimate would be able to promote the degree of national reconciliation required after so many years of war. Afghans, I repeatedly stressed, should be given a chance to find the areas in which they could unite.

I therefore decided to continue to advocate the establishment of a transitional government, as I had done in the "Scenario," but felt obliged to go one step further and indicate in a new proposal a set of arrangements acceptable to Najibullah, the resistance leaders and the Afghan "Diaspora." I had become convinced that it was also essential to consult the field commanders who were increasingly influential and who had advocated a swift internal settlement following the Soviet withdrawal. Angered by the resistance leaders' squabbles, they had threatened to form their own government in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. Their spokesman was quoted in a report by Richard Evans in the *Independent* of London as rejecting "absolutely" the interim government set up by the resistance leaders. "The government proclaimed in Peshawar is just a machination by outsiders who did not even consult the Afghan people," he had said. The "issue of leadership," he had added, "should be decided by a Loya Jirga, not behind close doors in Peshawar."[8]

Despite Zahir Shah's age and the objections of some of the fundamentalist resistance leaders, I had reached the conclusion, after talking to many Afghans, that only he could symbolize unity for Afghanistan. I was also convinced that with Washington's help, it would be possible to overcome Pakistan's reservations, which were based upon the former King's track record regarding the delimitation of the Afghan-Pakistani frontier. When the former King spoke to the press on the day in which the Geneva accords were signed, it was apparent that he and I had been able to reach an understanding on the steps that should be taken toward the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan. The former King said in Rome that a "Loya Jirga, a traditional assembly of tribal chiefs and other leaders," should be convened without delay.[9]

The "king's option" collapsed, however, from lack of will. Zahir Shah simply failed to gather the physical and intellectual strength that was needed to face the risks and dangers that lay ahead in the historical endeavor that he was being called upon to undertake. Had he only traveled to Peshawar, he would have instantly emerged as the leader of a mass of refugees eager to return to their homeland. No resistance leader would have been able to demonstrate the political support required to challenge the former monarch. The role that Prince Norodom Sihanouk played in the Cambodian settlement reinforced the conviction with which I repeatedly urged Zahir Shah to take active steps to stop a vicious civil war in his country.

In the circumstances, I decided that the best alternative, and one that had

the added advantage of not ruling out the involvement of the former King if he ever decided to participate in the process, was to propose that a group of eminent Afghans "of recognized independence and impartiality," the so-called "good Muslims" who lived inside and outside Afghanistan, should form a transitional government. We accordingly formulated a proposal, titled "A Peaceful Path Towards a Legitimate Broad-based Government of Afghanistan," which I was to submit to my interlocutors in Teheran, Islamabad, and Kabul (after the usual "nod" or "wink" from Washington and Moscow, who had been consulted frequently). If reduced to its essentials, the proposal contained the following elements:

- a "cooling-off" period that would allow the Afghans to be reunited in their homeland and would enable the international community to lend urgently needed humanitarian assistance
- the establishment, at an agreed-upon date, of a "National Government for Peace and Reconstruction," which would have as its main task the convening of a Loya Jirga, the traditional Afghan decision-making procedure. (It was suggested that the transitional government should remain in office for around six months.)
- a de facto cease-fire in place between contending factions, to become effective on the same day in which the National Government for Peace and Reconstruction took office.

Needless to say, the proposal was based and structured on the assumption that both superpowers, having signed the Geneva accords as guarantors, were giving practical meaning to the "symmetry" understandings and that international disengagement was indeed being effected in order to allow the Afghans themselves to sort out their differences. The proposal also assumed that the Afghan population was tired of the war and the suffering and that it was therefore opposed to any attempts to engage in further military confrontations. The proposal was formulated against the background of the unsuccessful efforts by Najibullah and the resistance leaders to set up a government which could command the broad support of the Afghan people.

III

As I prepared for my trip to the area, an important political development took place in Pakistan. On May 29 President Zia dismissed Prime Minister Junejo and his cabinet and dissolved the National Assembly. Zia accused the legislature of failing to maintain law and order and of not hastening the creation of an Islamic society in Pakistan. Ahmed Rashid reported in the *Independent* of London that unidentified sources had told him that Zia's sudden move against Junejo was prompted by a secret report prepared by three cabinet ministers on the explosion of the Ojhri ammunition dump near Rawalpindi, which was the main clearinghouse for U.S. arms supplies to the Afghan Mujahideen. The report had blamed the army for negligence, and Junejo had requested the resignation of General Akhtar Abdul Rahman, chairman of the Joint Chiefs

of Staff, and the removal of General Hamid Gul, the head of the intelligence services.[10]

In Kabul Najibullah dismissed Sultan Ali Keshtmand as Prime Minister on June 6 and appointed a mainly "nonparty" cabinet headed by Mohammad Hassan Sharq, an old-time protégé of Sardar Daoud (who led the coup against Zahir Shah) and a former Ambassador to India. Najibullah told me later that he thus intended to show that his party was not interested in holding a monopoly of power.

I landed in Teheran on June 29 and the following morning had a long meeting with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati. I then realized that the Iranians had become the most fervent advocates of a swift and strict implementation of the Geneva accords. Velayati urged me to promote the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan and hence the return of all refugees to their homeland. He did not comment on my proposal but implied that anything that had the effect of removing Najibullah and accelerating the return of the refugees to Afghanistan was acceptable to his Government.

Velayati arranged a meeting with the leaders of eight *mujahideen* groups who had organized a "Coalition Council." I met Ghori Ahmad Ali, the Speaker of the Coalition Council, Esmutallah Erfani, the Deputy Speaker, and Mohammad Karim Khalili, a prominent member of the Council. They were very courteous and supportive. The Speaker of the Council used the meeting to complain about the meager assistance, military and financial, that the "Teheran Eight" had received for their operations against the Soviet troops and about the fact that they were not being taken into account by the Peshawar leaders in the negotiations on the formation of an interim government. The Speaker stated categorically that the resistance groups based in Teheran would not therefore recognize the interim government set up in Peshawar. (It was to take four more years for the Peshawar Seven and the Teheran Eight to work out, under pressure mainly from the Government of Iran, certain understandings on consultation and coordination.)

In Islamabad I first reviewed with General Helminen the arrangements that had been made for the accommodation and monitoring activities of our military officers. I received very full and minutely organized briefings from several officers who covered all the various aspects of their work. In a DC-9 aircraft that UNGOMAP used for the transportation of U.N. "Milobs" I visited the Kacha Gardi refugee camp, where I addressed the refugees. In my speech I stressed the opportunity that the Geneva accords offered for an internal settlement and for their early return to Afghanistan. Sayed Mohammad Nasrat spoke on behalf of the refugees to thank me for my efforts. We next proceeded by helicopter to Michni Point and then to the Khyber Pass, where I was received with military honors by the Frontier Corps. John Isaac, a good friend and colleague who is an outstanding U.N. photographer, took a rather ridiculous photograph of me wearing a traditional Pushtun turban, which had been presented to me in a formal ceremony, and smoking a Cuban cigar. In Landikhotal there was a military banquet followed by a tribal dance. It would have been very risky to visit such places before the Geneva accords.

I was extremely glad to be received in Islamabad by the Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, who had once again been appointed Foreign Minister shortly after Junejo was sacked. He and I had a long conversation about the long list of allegations of noncompliance made by Kabul and the Soviets. I referred to the letters that Shevardnadze had sent to the U.N. and to Gorbachev's complaints to Reagan during the Moscow Summit in May about Pakistan's misbehavior. Yaqub stressed how difficult it was to stop a vast machinery that had functioned since the Soviet invasion but promised personally to look into the matter. He agreed that it would be "unforgivable" to give the Soviets an excuse to slow down or interrupt the withdrawal operations.

Before submitting to President Zia my proposal on the formation of a new government, I discussed it in great detail with Yaqub and Sattar, as well as with my friend Humayun Khan, a veteran of the Geneva negotiations who was returning from Delhi to replace Abdul Sattar, who had been appointed Ambassador to Moscow. They all felt that Pakistan would accept the proposal if Najibullah was willing to step down. U.S. Ambassador Raphel and British Ambassador Nicholas Barrington were enthusiastic, and Soviet Chargé d'Affaires Charchenko suggested that I show it to the Ambassador in Kabul, Nikolai Yegorychev, whom he described as a close associate of Gorbachev, before submitting it to Najibullah.

When I met Zia he was obviously interested in, and quite impressed by, the manner in which the proposal was structured. But he was skeptical that it could fly in Kabul and said that he would give me a formal reaction once he knew Najibullah's response. Zia made a number of detailed comments and assured me that his Government would support any "viable" solution to the Afghan internal conflict because the presence of the refugees constituted a very heavy burden at a time when Pakistan was facing serious financial problems.

When Arny Raphel invited me for a drink at the Embassy I asked him point blank if the United States was still providing military supplies to the *mujahideen.* He told me that it had not been possible to discontinue such assistance on May 15 because it had been necessary to replenish the Ojhri ammunition dump—which contained a large "cushion" of weapons, including long-range mortars, antitank missiles, and Stingers—that the United States had intended to deliver before the accords entered into force. Once the replenishment had been completed, all further supplies had been discontinued "a few days after May 15." This information was subsequently confirmed in Washington. In the *Washington Post* of July 16 David Ottaway quoted "administration sources" as saying that a "significant reduction" in arms crossing the border from Pakistan into Afghanistan had taken place since mid-June and that little more than small arms and ammunition was reaching the resistance. Ottaway's sources added that the supply of Stingers and other heavy weapons had "virtually stopped" under Soviet and U.N. pressure. Some U.S. officials had expressed concern that the Soviets might not meet their goal of a 50 percent withdrawal by August 15 "because of repeated guerrilla attacks on their forces." "The administration regards the 50 percent mark as a point of no return for a total withdrawal," Ottaway added.

When Raphel told me that the United States suspected that the Soviets had continued to assist Kabul, I said that we should not become involved in another "chicken-and-egg" situation. The Soviets had implied, I told Raphel, that they had been obliged to send additional supplies "around May 15" because Pakistani interference had increased when Soviet troops started to withdraw. We agreed that it was essential not to allow Kabul and Moscow to accuse Pakistan of such a large number of violations because the whole implementation process might be derailed.

In Kabul, where I stayed four days, from July 5 to July 8, I also reviewed with General Helminen the activities of our monitoring teams and had a working dinner with all the military officers. Morale was high, but there was a pervasive sense of danger because there were constant rocket attacks; it was generally assumed that the *mujahideen* were preparing a major attack on the city. A number of security precautions, including placing plastic film on windows and sandbags around the buildings, were being taken in our headquarters. Jon Glassman, the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, also showed me, and explained in fluent Spanish, the steel reinforcements that were being installed in the U.S. Embassy. All foreign embassies were reducing their staff and evacuating dependents, but there was no panic.

I held a long meeting with General of the Army Valentin Varennikov, a cool, competent, and precise military officer, who had established an excellent working relationship with General Helminen. General Varennikov made a very full and detailed explanation of Soviet withdrawal operations and of the removal of mines. He expressed confidence that the withdrawal would proceed according to schedule. General Varennikov told me that when the Geneva accords were signed there were 100,300 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, in 18 garrisons. Thirty thousand military personnel had already returned to the Soviet Union. The General also told me that 13,310 Soviet soldiers lost their lives during the war, 35,478 were wounded, and 311 were missing in action as of May 15.

After I explained my proposal to Soviet Ambassador Yegorychev, about which he presumably had detailed instructions from Moscow, he told me that it was an insult to request a head of state to step down, but he seemed much more interested in knowing the reaction that I had received in Islamabad. Although his embassy resembled a fortress Yegorychev seemed collected and composed. He repeated several times that the "nightmare" was coming to an end and emphasized how important it was that I should let him know Najibullah's reaction to my proposal.

"I sure know what you mean," said Najibullah after I outlined the proposal. Needless to say, I did so with extreme care. "I am prepared, I am ready, to step down if you provide adequate assurances that the Pakistanis and their friends will also act in conformity with your proposal. I will not step down unless I am absolutely sure that they will not flout the agreement and kill my compatriots. I will step down only for the sake of a negotiated solution, if adequate assurances are given to us that a Loya Jirga will be properly held, and that our participation is guaranteed." We spent most of the meeting—and a lunch to which he invited me—discussing what he meant by "assurances" and "guarantees," as well as,

predictably, the violations that he alleged had been committed by Pakistan and that country's presumed ulterior intentions. He was not a scared or a nervous man; quite the contrary, he seemed serene, fully in control, and ready to face all the ominous eventualities that could follow the Soviet withdrawal.

Najibullah was particularly skeptical of Pakistan's willingness to pressure the resistance to reach a settlement. He was convinced that Washington and Islamabad were still urging the Peshawar leaders to capture Kabul and set up a *mujahideen* government. I was not in a position to give him any assurances in that context but told him that Zia had not raised any objections to my proposal and showed him a clipping dated June 28 in which Yaqub was quoted as saying that "if the Afghans have a jirga and clearly express their desire for Zahir Shah's return it would not be for Pakistan to stand in the way."[11] Najibullah retorted that Zia had also said, according to the *Frontier Post* of June 29, that "he foresees civil war and bloodbath in Afghanistan and eventually the *mujahideen* will set up a government."

Throughout our meeting Najibullah had boasted that he had many contacts with the resistance and had established direct lines of communication with a large number of influential Afghans, inside and outside the country. I felt that in the circumstances it would be better to let him explore the possibilities of an agreement, preferably on the basis of the U.N. proposal, and to allow a process of negotiations to start without my own involvement. I was determined to act as a catalyst and not as a mediator. There were other ways in which I could help at a later stage. I therefore told Najibullah that I was "leaving the proposal on the table" and that I earnestly hoped that it would facilitate an internal settlement that would end the fighting.

Back in Islamabad I faced renewed pressure from the Government to hold a second meeting with the resistance leaders. I had been told, when I arrived from Teheran, that it would be useful to explain my proposal to the resistance leaders, whose chairmanship had been assumed by Gailani, perhaps the most "moderate" of the seven. The leaders were, once again, divided as to whether they should meet me, but Gailani had spoken publicly in favor of a meeting. "From the very beginning I was for a meeting with Mr. Cordovez, not against it," he had told *The Muslim* on July 1.

Unlike the previous time, when I agreed to say that I was seeking a meeting with the resistance leaders because I perceived it as a prerequisite to a withdrawal agreement, this time I told my Pakistani interlocutors that I would be ready to meet the leaders if they so wished but that I was not prepared to invite them. They knew why I was there, and they were fully aware that I was carrying a new proposal. It had been discussed with the highest representatives of the Teheran Eight, and I had visited a refugee camp where I had received very warm expressions of support. If the Peshawar Seven did not wish to discuss the proposal with me, I would submit it to the Afghan people through the press.

After Gailani's statement, the resistance had decided that I should meet with Engineer Ahmad Shah, the "Prime Minister" of the "interim government"

appointed by the resistance leaders. I absolutely refused. I reminded Sattar, who brought me the message, that my role was to promote the formation of a new government, which was unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. If I met the head of a government that had not been recognized by any member state, not even by Pakistan, those governments that had reservations about the involvement of a United Nations official in such activities would rightly take exception. Those were the institutional and juridical reasons. I felt, in addition, that such a meeting would erode the chances of widening the political support required to set in motion an intra-Afghan dialogue.

I thus decided to go public. But first I had a long meeting with Yaqub at which I told him that Najibullah had not rejected the proposal and had not been offended by its implications. On the contrary, Najibullah had assured me that if there was a consensus among Afghans to accept the proposal he would feel duty-bound to act in a patriotic manner. I therefore urged the Government of Pakistan to make every effort to persuade the resistance leaders to consider the ideas contained in my proposal. I said that I was aware that it would take some time to convince the leaders but that Pakistan was equally aware of the need to proceed as expeditiously as possible.

On Saturday, July 9, I gave a press conference at the Holiday Inn at which I explained my proposal for the "peace and reconstruction" of Afghanistan. I reported that the Soviet withdrawal was proceeding smoothly and that, of more than two thousand minefields that had been laid by Soviet forces, some fifteen hundred had already been removed. Those remaining would be removed as the withdrawal continued. I had been informed that the Soviet army had also cleared some 240,000 mines and explosive devices laid by the *mujahideen*.

I said that these were facts that showed that the implementation of the Geneva accords was creating the external conditions that would allow the establishment of a government founded on the broadest possible support of the Afghan people. All previous attempts to set up such a government had failed, but the "cooling-off" period that I proposed would enable the healing to begin. Afghans could then proceed in accordance with their own traditions to choose a government suited to their needs and objectives. The transitional regime that I was proposing was in essence a "council of notables" that would organize a Loya Jirga, the quintessence of Afghan traditions and decision making. "These are but a few considerations and ideas that the Afghans might wish to bear in mind," I said, "at a time when they are to take decisions, which they alone can take, to chart their destiny."

The hotel was suddenly inundated with Afghans who had come to express their appreciation and support. Charlie Santos, who had become my chief assistant for "government-formation" activities, told me that the Pakistani intelligence services were flabbergasted when they were confronted in the hotel lobby with such an avalanche of Afghans, some of them wearing their fighting garments and carrying guns. Some had come all the way from Afghanistan. Ahmed Rashid described the scene in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of July 21 as follows:

> [W]hile Cordovez was in Islamabad, representatives of tribal chiefs, field commanders, and the *ullema* [religious teachers] poured in to see him, bearing huge petitions filled with hundreds of signatures and thumb impressions of Afghan notables. "They all said that a jirga was the only way to prevent further bloodshed and stop Afghans killing Afghans," Cordovez said. "These are the voices of the silent majority who have not been heard throughout the war."
>
> The most significant endorsement was given by representatives of Jalaluddin Haqqani, the most important *mujahideen* commander in Paktia province, whose forces have besieged the Afghan army garrison of Khost. He is the first fundamentalist Muslim field commander to openly break with his party line.

It was a long and tiring day, but I shall never forget the expressions in the eyes of those Afghans who came to see me that Saturday in Islamabad. I often think that it was, perhaps, the most rewarding experience in my career as an international official. There I was, in a foreign country, thousands of miles away from my own, playing a role in an internal political conflict and receiving the kind of endorsements that politicians savor in electoral campaigns. Before the press conference I had written a letter to Pir Syed Ahmed Gailani, then chairman of the resistance alliance, to which I attached the text of the proposal. "I very much regret that we were not able to have a discussion," I wrote, "because I attach considerable importance to your views. I remain deeply committed to the achievement of peace in your country." I had met a couple of times with two of his closest associates, who had explained the pressures under which the resistance was functioning. "One day a Pakistani official tells us that we should meet with you, the next day another official says that we should reject any meeting," they told me.

Later in the afternoon a protocol officer came to convey President Zia's request for a meeting the following day, on which I was scheduled to fly to Geneva. I promptly agreed, of course, and suggested that I would go to the presidential residence, which was on the way to the airport, at 9 A.M. When the protocol officer said that it might be too early for the President I pointed out that, given the time difference, if I left Islamabad too late I might not reach Geneva before the midnight closing of the airport. "The President is not an early riser," he said, visibly embarrassed. That was a phrase that I had never heard and which greatly amused me because I suffer from the same impairment. "Neither am I," I said. "Why not have the meeting today at midnight?" He telephoned the President, who wholeheartedly welcomed my suggestion.

Zia was in excellent spirits and evidently impressed by what he had been told about my meeting with the Afghans. "I wonder what the leaders who refused to talk to me are thinking," I said. Zia laughed heartily. We then had, as always, a most pleasant exchange, during which it was obvious that the day's developments had had an effect on his perception of the Afghan situation. He told me that his Government would continue to press the resistance leaders with a view to bringing about an "honorable meeting of minds with other Afghans." Zia added that he categorically supported my efforts and that my proposal would undoubtedly promote movement in the right direction. He therefore intended to

consult the leaders on that basis and would urge them to work more actively towards a negotiated solution. I told the President that my staff had a list of thirty "good Muslims," which had been laboriously compiled and checked and which could serve as the basis for the transitional government.

"I leave the U.N. proposal on the table, Mr. President," I said. "I trust that you will make good use of it." It was rather late when we said good-bye. It was the last time I saw him. Only a few weeks later he died in a plane crash, the precise circumstances of which have not, to my knowledge, been fully established.

IV

Scanning the Pakistani press of July 10 and 11 for editorial comment on my proposal, I found overwhelming approval and support. "A voice of sanity in a medley of confusion," said Dawn of Karachi; the *Frontier Post* of Peshawar pointed out, under the headline "Sound Proposal," that it "merits the most careful and open minded consideration from all sides" and asserted that it was "based on principles that no one can honestly dispute." "Anyone who wishes Afghanistan well would be in favor of the latest Cordovez proposal" read an editorial of the *Nation* of Lahore; "A Well-meaning Proposal" was the title of an editorial in the *Pakistan Times* in which the paper supported the objective of international disengagement underlying the proposal. In its editorial "Give Peace a Chance," *The Muslim* said that the proposal deserved careful consideration "by all sides, including their supporters and the patrons of their supporters."

A few days later it was reported that Gailani had told the press that he was "ready" to accept my proposal. Gailani had pointed out that he was speaking as head of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) and not as chairman of the resistance alliance.[12] Gailani's endorsement was followed by that of Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, head of the Afghan National Liberation Front, one other "moderate" group included in the Peshawar Seven alliance. "We believe," he said, "that the holding of a Loi Jirga is the most appropriate procedure for the establishment of a legal and legitimate Afghan government in accordance with the Islamic values and national traditions of Afghanistan."[13]

These were encouraging developments. I was increasingly confident that there would be a gradual widening of support and that Afghans would increasingly step forward to participate in the process outlined in the proposal. But I was conscious that political accommodation could be achieved only if the withdrawal process continued without a hitch. There had been two moments of apprehension when Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky warned that the withdrawal process might be prolonged if Pakistan did not stop its assistance to the resistance[14] and when President Zia, citing "U.N. sources," claimed that the withdrawal had been interrupted. The State Department then said, however, that the United States accepted as authoritative a statement by Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the Soviet armed forces Chief of Staff, that the

withdrawal was continuing on schedule.[15] On August 15 the Soviets duly completed the first stage of the withdrawal in strict compliance with the Geneva accords. "The vast majority of Afghanistan is now free of Soviet troops," said Phyllis Oakley, the State Department's spokesperson, on August 18.

The fact, however, that the Soviets were withdrawing as prescribed in the Geneva accords was not, apparently, a good enough reason to persuade Washington that it should press Pakistan and the resistance to engage in negotiations for the establishment of a broad-based government in Kabul. This was well put in an article titled "Hands Off Afghanistan," written by Barrett R. Rubin, assistant professor of political science at Yale University, and published in the *Christian Science Monitor* of July 28. Asserting that the result of the process set out in my proposal "would be the virtual elimination of communist power from Afghanistan," Professor Rubin stressed that "giving [U.S.] public and vocal support for Cordovez's initiative is essential, and the U.S.S.R. should be challenged to do likewise."

As a matter of fact, when I left New York to take up my new responsibilities as the Foreign Minister of my country, neither U.S. nor Soviet support for my proposal seemed to be forthcoming. If there was any intention in Washington and/or Moscow to encourage either side along the lines that I had proposed, such intentions were not evident, and my American and Soviet interlocutors were manifestly evasive when I raised the question. "You have started a pattern in the solution of regional conflicts," said George Shultz in Quito when he came for the presidential inauguration, but he became silent when I asked if the United States was promoting acceptance of my proposal in Pakistan. I presumed then, and nothing has made me change that impression, that the State Department was not happy with the hesitant attitude that Washington was taking at that stage. I was subsequently told that some officials in other sectors of the administration were not altogether convinced that the proposal would lead to the removal of Najibullah. Be that as it may, the Soviets, too, were engaged in what seemed as only perfunctory, or at best languid, efforts to persuade Najibullah to intensify consultations on the proposal.

After a long period of reflection I have concluded that, had President Zia lived, an early breakthrough on my proposal, which would have enabled the government-formation process to start within a relatively short time, would have been possible. I am convinced that he was the only person who was capable of persuading the resistance leaders and, regardless of what has been said, I also believe that he considered that the proposal contained a suitable and viable formula for an internal settlement in Afghanistan. He was a skilled strategist and was undoubtedly planning his game. To start with, he had instructed Yaqub to travel to Moscow for consultations with the Soviets. All concerned—Najibullah, the Soviets, Washington—were awaiting his next move. I therefore feel that when Zia died in Bahawalpur on August 17, the chances of swiftly setting in motion a process of pacification and political decision making were severely curtailed.

V

In mid-September I was required, unexpectedly and not entirely willingly, to resume my mediation role. At a foreign ministers' meeting of non-aligned nations in Cyprus, which I attended on behalf of my Government, the Pakistani and the Afghan delegations were taking widely different positions on a draft resolution in which Abdul Wakil wanted to include language urging Pakistan to comply with the Geneva accords. A number of delegations asked me to prepare a text acceptable to Yaqub and Wakil, and after many hours of negotiations I submitted to the conference a revised draft that was unanimously adopted.

From Nicosia I flew to New York to carry out with General Dibuama and my staff a review of the reports received from UNGOMAP (all of which had been faxed to Quito) and to hold consultations with the Ambassadors of troop-contributing countries. The Ambassadors required periodic reassurances that their people were well protected and that we had made adequate contingency evacuation arrangements from Kabul. I reported to Pérez de Cuéllar that the Soviets were preparing for the second phase of the withdrawal and that UNGOMAP had continued to receive a large number of allegations of violations of the noninterference provisions of the accords. At first such allegations had been made by Afghanistan, but subsequently Pakistan had also lodged a number of complaints. Kabul had argued that there were constant border crossings of men and matériel, cross-border firings, continued presence of training camps and arms depots, restrictions placed on refugees who wished to return to their homeland, and a variety of "hostile political activities," including radio broadcasts. Pakistan's allegations related, in the main, to bombing incidents and sabotage activities. UNGOMAP was doing its best to ascertain the veracity of these allegations and had repeatedly pointed out to both sides that many of their complaints either did not clearly constitute violations of the accords or had been presented in such a way as to hamper effective investigation.

When Shevardnadze spoke in the General Assembly in September, he tried to use the interruption of the withdrawal process—which the Soviet authorities had explained to UNGOMAP as "operationally" required before the second phase of withdrawal—to press Pakistan to discontinue the violations of the Geneva accords. Ironically, it was a U.S. official who then pointed out that what seemed to be a pause was not surprising because the final pullout would have to take place rapidly in order to protect the lives of departing troops. "A Soviet failure to meet the final withdrawal is not expected," he added.[16]

Vorontsov's appointment as Ambassador in Afghanistan in October 1988 signaled an intensification of Soviet efforts to set up a new government. The Soviet Union agreed to hold direct talks with the resistance leaders, something that the latter had been requesting for a long time. The Soviet move came after informal attempts to work out understandings between the resistance and Kabul. the *Washington Post* reported that in one of such instances, Marouf Dalawabi, a former Syrian Prime Minister, had carried to Peshawar a proposal from Moscow "similar to the one made by U.N. special envoy Diego Cordovez." That only showed that there were no alternatives to the U.N. proposal and that

eventually all concerned would have to agree that it had all the ingredients of a fair and durable solution. But all Soviet overtures were rejected because the fundamentalist resistance leaders took the position that they did not want "other people to interfere in our internal affairs."[17]

There were recurring reports that Najibullah was about to be replaced, according to some sources because the Soviets had decided to "drop" him and according to others as a result of a resurgence of internal struggles in the ruling party. When Afghan Prime Minister Sharq was appointed head of the Afghan delegation to the General Assembly there was widespread speculation that the Soviets were trying to promote him as a "conciliator." He had surprised everybody when he bluntly stated that "the Afghan people do not have much confidence in the ruling People's Democratic Party or in the *mujahideen.*"[18] Yet another rumor was that Moscow's attention was shifting to one of Najibullah's most effective opponents, Ahmad Shah Massoud, the outstanding commander of the Pansjer Valley, who was earlier reported to have negotiated cease-fire agreements with the Soviets and had shown remarkable independence from the Peshawar leaders.[19]

If a factional power struggle had broken out in Kabul there was total disarray in Peshawar. On October 12 Edward Gorman reported in the *Times* of London that the degree of unity that the resistance leaders had achieved had been imposed by President Zia, "who moulded an arbitrary choice of seven parties into an alliance and kept it together by declaring that only by staying in the alliance could the parties receive vital weapons and aid supplies." Gorman added that, following Zia's death, the leaders had become increasingly tainted by what many ordinary Afghans believed was the corrupting influence of Western money. A well-informed analyst had told Gorman that Afghans considered that the interim government set up by the resistance "is not broad-based, that it is staffed by unqualified people, and that it was created by pressure from outside." "It has very little hope—probably none—of ever functioning," the analyst had added.

In such circumstances I felt that one way of encouraging consideration of the U.N. proposal might be to make a public appeal to former King Zahir Shah to lead a broad movement of national reconciliation. I had been told that Yaqub had visited Rome, and I knew that Najibullah, the Soviets, and the Americans had sent special emissaries to talk to the former King but that it had proved impossible to convince him of the need to take a more active role. A public appeal, I thought, might be the way to induce a proud Afghan to make a move.

In an interview with Paul Lewis that was published in the *New York Times* on October 22, I therefore said that "the time has come for the King to step forward and give a lead to the process of national reconciliation called for in the Geneva accords." I also called on all Afghans to help form a broad-based coalition government and named some of the prominent personalities of the Afghan "Diaspora" that I had met as having a special responsibility to prevent chaos and civil war in their country. A press report from Rome quoted General Abdul Wali, the former King's son-in-law and his closest adviser, as saying that Zahir Shah "continued to favor the convocation of a Loya Jirga to draw together the widest possible array of leaders to shape a transitional regime."[20]

Although my appeal did not prompt immediate action by the former King, it did provoke renewed expressions of concern regarding the need to initiate the process towards the convening of a Loya Jirga. According to press and diplomatic reports from Peshawar, a growing number of Afghans, including political parties, intellectuals, commanders, and refugees, were voicing support for the U.N. proposal "as the only way of bringing an end to the ongoing bloodshed" in Afghanistan. I was told that Washington and Moscow had welcomed and quietly endorsed my statement. Vorontsov traveled to Rome a few days later for consultations with the former King. "Mr. Diego Cordovez's plan of a political settlement with a broad-based government in Kabul must now evoke a positive response from Pakistan and the seven-party alliance in Peshawar," said *Dawn* of Karachi on October 28.

A statement by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar when my appeal to the former King was published in Pakistan was as negative as it was predictable. He said that the Afghan nation had lost confidence in me and that I should be replaced. "Cordovez has always been trying to prove that the Afghan crisis is indigenous while we have been fighting against foreign aggression," he added. "As soon as the foreign intervention ends, peace will be restored in Afghanistan," he proclaimed.[21] (Hekmatyar was to chastise Vorontsov in equally strong terms when he heard that Vorontsov had visited the former King in Rome and subsequently reprimanded "Western circles" because he had been described as "radical.") The other leaders said nothing. When Burhanuddin Rabbani, who had become the chairman of the seven-party alliance, was asked if he intended to have a meeting with me in New York during the General Assembly, he said only that "there was nothing to talk about in Cordovez's proposals and therefore there is no need to see him."[22] Some other Afghan leaders, including Haji Almas Miskeen, head of the Great United National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, reiterated their support for my proposal.

An unexpected development, which may or may have not been prompted by my appeal but which took place shortly after my interview with Paul Lewis, was the decision of the resistance leaders to call for the convening of a 450-member council (a *shura,* a traditional legislative body) before the completion of the Soviet withdrawal. The *shura,* which was to be the second gathering of its kind since the British were driven from Afghanistan a century and a half before, would appoint a head of state and have powers to negotiate a cease-fire with the Kabul regime. In making the announcement Rabbani pointed out that the process of electing the members of the *shura* would be completed "in a little bit more or less than three months."[23]

Rabbani did not say what would be the fate of the previously appointed interim government consequent upon the convening of a *shura.* Its "prime minister" had written a letter to the Secretary General requesting formal U.N. recognition of his "government." Yunis Khalis, the former chairman of the seven-party alliance, disputed Rabbani's contention that the *shura* would be constituted through elections. He argued that the resistance alliance had agreed that "true believers and honest Muslims" would be nominated to the *shura.*[24]

Like Yaqub, who publicly supported the convening of the *shura,* I felt that it was a positive development, at least in the sense that it seemed to end the political inertia of the resistance leaders. Moreover, whether or not the efforts to convene a *shura* were successful, they were consistent with the U.N. proposal. What was important was to start a political process of dialogue and consultations, and if the resistance considered that it should begin by convening a *shura*—which is, indeed, an Afghan traditional institution—it was a step in the right direction. The convocation to the *shura* was also opportune because it was being made at a time when the Soviets had escalated military pressure on Pakistan and the *mujahideen* that included firing at least ten SS1 Scud missiles at resistance positions near the Pakistani border. There were also renewed threats to slow down or interrupt the Soviet withdrawal, but I received assurances from the Soviets that the withdrawal would be completed within the deadline set out in the Geneva accords.

VI

Toward the end of 1988 there was admittedly very limited movement regarding the U.N. proposal. As I have said earlier, it had been formulated on the assumption that one of the main objectives of the Geneva accords—a complete international disengagement in the affairs of Afghanistan—would be achieved at an early date, but after a period during which military assistance was discontinued by both sides, in accordance with the "symmetry" understandings, the United States and the Soviet Union—I do not know the correct sequence—resumed weapon supplies to the resistance and to Kabul.

An American friend told me that I was asking Washington to waste a decade of struggle against a Communist regime in pursuit of a chimera. At the official level both Washington and Moscow claimed that their actions were essentially retaliatory. I concluded that mutual distrust had, once again, prompted both sides to disregard the understandings reached partly because Cold War prejudices had not as yet succumbed to evolving shifts in the world's political geometry and because militarist pressures had prevented the initiation of a meaningful intra-Afghan dialogue envisaged in the U.N. proposal. The significance of Zia's death in that context will have to remain a subject of speculation. If my own impression that he intended to encourage negotiations on the basis of the U.N. scheme has cast me as a compulsive optimist, so be it. I was in any case fully aware that his passing, and the changes it brought in the political landscape of his country, required certain strategy adjustments designed to neutralize the increased militarist tendencies that were becoming so obvious.

What I had not realized then, perhaps because it was difficult to imagine, was that a sort of coup against me had been prepared by some of the Secretary General's aides, assisted by one other sycophant who expected thereby to become part of the inner circle. They did not seem, or were unwilling, to understand that lack of movement on the U.N. proposal was not a personal failure and were undoubtedly convinced that they would be able to formulate and carry out

a successful strategy to solve the internal Afghan conflict. What is deplorable is that they used as a pretext Hekmatyar's statement, as well as another mildly critical comment made by Rabbani in New York, because they thereby implied that the United Nations could be placed in the humiliating position of allowing two fundamentalist leaders to veto a U.N. proposal.

I did not say a word at the time but continued to follow developments with deep concern. I remained convinced that if the proposal that I had formulated was abandoned—that was clearly the intention of the Secretary General's aides—it would be necessary, sooner or later, to revive and reinstate it. This, I felt, would involve enormous political difficulties and undermine the U.N.'s prestige. I continued to supervise the implementation of the Geneva accords, but when I became aware that the Secretary General's aides also wanted to extend UNGOMAP beyond the deadline set out in the accords, I decided that I would resign on the date in which the accords prescribed that the monitoring arrangements should be terminated. Throughout my U.N. career I had consistently held that "conflict management" often means that a problem or situation is unduly prolonged, and I was determined not to be a participant in one of such exercises.

The Secretary General's aides apparently had the illusion that a meeting between Vorontsov and the resistance leaders in Taif, Saudi Arabia, would mark the beginning of negotiations, in which they expected to play a role, that would lead to the formation of a coalition government in Afghanistan. (The aides expected to fly to Taif in the aircraft that carried the resistance leaders and Pakistani intelligence officials, but the Soviets barred their participation in the meeting.) The meeting itself was a fiasco because, according to a senior *mujahideen* official, "we did not even reach a consensus on meeting with the Soviets, which is a very basic thing." According to the same report, written by Henry Kamm in the *New York Times* of December 21, only Rabbani, and Sibgatullah Mojaddedi attended the meeting. The report added that Mojaddedi was to take over the chairmanship of the alliance from Rabbani, but "the date of turnover is a subject of disagreement between the two."[25]

A second meeting between Vorontsov and the resistance, held in Islamabad in January, also ended in failure. "We believe that the negotiations are unproductive and unnecessary," said a spokesman for the resistance leaders when the talks were broken off.[26] Vorontsov then urged the United Nations "to play its due role in the formation of a broad-based consultative council (*shura*) in Afghanistan, a proposal which he described as a 'good idea'."[27] Only a few days before the completion of the Soviet withdrawal, Shevardnadze made a last-ditch effort to reach an understanding with the Government of Pakistan and the resistance leaders. But after two days of talks with Pakistani officials—the resistance refused to meet him—Shevardnadze failed to work out any understanding and left Islamabad in total frustration. A proposal by the Soviet Union to convene a U.N. conference on Afghanistan was also rejected by Pakistan and the United States.

After several postponements, the *shura* was finally convened on February 10 in a huge Muslim pilgrim transit center built by the Government of Pakistan

between Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The meeting was preceded by a demonstration in Peshawar on February 8 at which at least seven thousand Afghans protested against the resistance leaders and their "undemocratic" selection of *shura* members. Most speakers rejected the *shura* and demanded the return of former King Zahir Shah. Other speakers pointed out that the *shura* was an imposition on the Afghan people by outside powers.[28]

According to Barbara Crossette of the *New York Times,* "It was not clear until the meeting opened, more than an hour late, whether all the leaders of the seven-member opposition alliance would attend, because of last-minute squabbles."[29] In the event all the leaders did attend, but only two hours later it was unclear whether the *shura* had been adjourned, postponed, or altogether canceled because a delegation of the Teheran Eight resistance leaders decided to boycott the proceedings at the last minute. (The *shura* was subsequently reconvened and appointed a second "interim government," which quickly faded into irrelevance.) There was apparently considerable disorder and confusion. Mariana Baabar reported in the *Nation* of February 11 that "[t]he chaos and pandemonium resulted in glass doors being smashed and as stony-faced delegates sat in front of a stage with the seven Peshawar-based leaders, the media were asked to take a quick round of the conference place, and pushed out quickly again." Those who had considered that the *shura* was essentially a manipulation by Pakistan's intelligence services as an alternative, rather than as a first step, to negotiations probably felt that they had been proved right.

VII

Four days later, on Wednesday, February 15, 1989, at 11:55 A.M. local time, precisely nine months after the Geneva accords came into effect, General Boris V. Gromov, a Hero of the Soviet Union and Commander of all Soviet forces in Afghanistan, walked across the steel Friendship Bridge to the border city of Termez in Uzbekistan. "There is not a single Soviet soldier or officer left behind me," General Gromov told a television reporter waiting on the bridge. "Our nine-year stay ends with this."[30]

VIII

The Government of Pakistan decided, four years too late, to "break china," the phrase used by Yaqub Khan when he concluded, in the early stages of the negotiations toward the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan, that what was needed in order to achieve a lasting political solution was to dispense with the fragile unity of the Peshawar Seven."Pakistan will not allow the Afghan peace process to be held hostage by a few rejectionists," said Siddiq Kanju, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Pakistan, on January 27, 1992.[31]

If, as reported at the time, the Interservices Intelligence Directorate (ISI) continued its assistance to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar as an insurance policy, it

means that Kanju, like Yaqub, was unaware of their activities and that consequently Pakistan was once again carrying out two Afghan policies. The United Nations had, in the meantime, sat on the sidelines, passive and presumably unable to move in any direction. For, when the Secretary General's aides destroyed the scaffolding that my staff and I had laboriously set in place, wide sectors of Afghan society whose participation was essential to set up a broad-based government were excluded from the political process. I had consistently advocated the incorporation of commanders, tribal leaders, spiritual leaders, intellectuals, technocrats, the Teheran-based resistance and prominent personalities in exile.

The Secretary General's aides did not, apparently, understand the implications of having the United Nations sanction attempts to set in motion negotiations exclusively between the Soviets and the Peshawar resistance, as if they were the only two parties to the conflict. This two-sided conception of the process, which neglected the moderate elements of Afghan society in exile, obliterated the foundations upon which the United Nations was expected to contribute to the Afghans' efforts to bring about a Pax Afghana.

In the event Pérez de Cuéllar himself realized that the policy that his aides were trying to implement was counterproductive. In May 1991 he made a statement that constituted a recognition that the large purposes which the U.N. had set itself to achieve through the Geneva accords remained valid. The statement carried forward the U.N. approach underlying the "Scenario" prepared in 1987 and the proposal presented in Islamabad in July 1988, but, in order to win the nominal approval of Pakistan, the Secretary General was obliged to confine himself to a reaffirmation of the principles underlying the U.N. proposals of 1987 and 1988: the recognition of the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government, an intra-Afghan dialogue leading to a transition mechanism to set up a broad-based government, and an end to hostilities and arms supplies to all Afghan sides.

A cessation of all arms supplies by Washington, through Pakistan, and by Moscow, was, of course, crucial. In an OP-ED article that I wrote in the *Washington Post* on April 12, 1990, I stressed that the time had come to shift the expenditures from weapons to reconstruction and development assistance. I pointed out that the Afghan and the Pakistani people were tired of the fighting and that the continuation of arms supplies to both sides was therefore generating increasing animosity toward the United States and the Soviet Union. I urged the two guarantors of the Geneva accords to work out an agreement, "which could be called 'negative symmetry' or plain common sense," at the summit that was to be held in Washington in late May or early June 1990.

Apparently Presidents Bush and Gorbachev did discuss the main elements of such an agreement, but it was left to Secretary of State James Baker and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to formulate the details. When Baker and Shevardnadze met in the Soviet city of Irkutsk in August and in New York in October, certain understandings were reached that allowed them to formalize a text when they again met in Houston in December. But, according to senior American officials who attended the meeting, after both sides had developed an agreed text Shev-

ardnadze changed the Soviet position and refused to accept a specific timetable for an aid cutoff, insisted that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran join in the cutoff, and demanded that a cutoff be made conditional upon a cease-fire to which all Afghan resistance factions would be committed.

Shevardnadze's change of attitude was seen by the U.S. Government as a glaring indication of the tensions prevailing in Moscow and of the pressures that the Soviet military were exerting on Gorbachev. Shevardnadze made his dramatic statement of resignation before the Congress of People's Deputies only a few days later, when he warned that reactionary forces were threatening the Soviet Union with the resumption of dictatorship. The coup that he had predicted took place in August 1991. The negotiations continued, however, and, on September 13, 1991, an agreement was announced in Moscow by Secretary of State Baker, who had become a vigorous advocate of an arms cutoff, and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin. The cessation of all arms supplies became effective on January 1, 1992. It was, at long last, a concrete expression of support to U.N. efforts. The Pakistani decision to "break china" became inevitable.

The U.N. then engaged in frantic efforts to work out a settlement on the basis, belatedly, "of consultations with all segments of the Afghan people." The settlement, according to press reports, was to involve the convening, during the second half of April, of an assembly of 150 Afghans at Geneva or Vienna; a "pretransition council" that would assume office in Kabul; and the holding of "free and fair" elections. A beleaguered Najibullah was reported to have agreed, once again, to give up power. It was, in essence, the same scheme proposed in 1987 and 1988 except that I had always felt that it was illusory to think of holding elections in Afghanistan at that time. I had been consistently told that a traditional Loya Jirga—appropriately adjusted to the new realities of Afghan society—was the most advisable, and perhaps the only possible, means of decision making in the circumstances in which the country was living. Had the U.N. persevered and persisted in the promotion of the original U.N. proposals, an orderly, and in any case a more meaningful, process of consultations would have eventually evolved, the power and influence of the militarists would have been accordingly eroded, arms supplies would have been discontinued earlier, and all Afghans would have felt obliged to contribute to a negotiated political solution.

Pakistan, eager to cut its links with the fundamentalists at a time when Afghanistan could become a major transit point for goods moving between the newly independent Central Asian states and the port of Karachi, joined Saudi Arabia and Iran in support of the U.N. plan, stopped weapons deliveries, and, at least for some time, distanced itself from its former protégés.

The U.N. efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement, and a profusion of optimistic statements by U.N. spokesmen, were unfortunately overtaken by events. In mid-April, after General Abdul Rashid Doestam, the Uzbek leader of a militia alliance, turned against Najibullah, Ahmad Shah Massoud and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar started to move towards the capital. On April 16 Najibullah fled into hiding in a U.N. compound after he was prevented by *mujahideen* troops from boarding a U.N. aircraft at Kabul airport. Competing rebel factions rushed to fill

the power vacuum. U.N. efforts "have not been successful," said Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.[32]

Fighting engulfed the country but it was nonetheless possible to organize a transfer of power to the *mujahideen*. Professor Sebghatullah Mojaddedi, leader of the Afghan National Liberation Front (Jabha-e-Najat-e-Melli Afghanistan) became Acting President of the newly proclaimed Islamic State of Afghanistan. The ceremony was attended by a delegation of officials of the outgoing government. Mojaddedi was appointed for a period of two months, but he later declared that he intended to remain in office up to two years. Hekmatyar refused to participate in Mojaddedi's government, in which Massoud was Defense Minister. Tensions intensified and fighting continued, as well as looting, in an atmosphere characterized by an undercurrent of chaos. On May 29 a rocket hit the plane bringing Mojaddedi back from Pakistan. He and sixty-nine others escaped unharmed. Mojaddedi later accused Communists and fighters loyal to Hekmatyar of the attack. Mojaddedi stepped down peacefully on June 28, and Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of Jamaat Islami, one of the strongest guerrilla factions, became President. General Doestam demanded the establishment of a federal state that would ensure the protection of Uzbeks, Tajiks, and other minorities.

Tribal rivalries, as well as religious and ethnic rifts, will undoubtedly continue in Afghanistan. The history of a country cannot suddenly change course. The Soviets paid a very high price when they attempted to do so by the imposition of a strong central regime. In fact, not unlike the British in the last century, the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and others were also forced to learn the costs of playing the Great Game. It is salutary, therefore, that—at least for some time—outsiders will not meddle. Despite the struggle for power in Kabul that has persisted since the Soviet withdrawal, most of Afghanistan has remained unaffected by the fighting. I am therefore confident that the traditional society that has existed in Afghanistan for centuries, not immune from a degree of occasional warfare but endowed with the attributes that foster the Afghans' fierce sense of independence, will be gradually reinstituted. "The United Nations negotiated the Russian exit," said the *Times* of London on April 27. "Its job is now done. The world has no business in that country's tribal disputes and blood feuds."

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APPENDIX
THE GENEVA ACCORDS

Bilateral Agreement Between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in Particular on Non-Interference and Non-Intervention

The Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, hereinafter referred to as the High Contracting Parties,

Desiring to normalize relations and promote good-neighborliness and cooperation as well as to strengthen international peace and secutiry in the region,

Considering that full observance of the principle of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal and external affairs of States is of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the fulfillment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the inalienable right of States freely to determine their own political, economic, cultural and social systems in accordance with the will of their peoples, without outside intervention, interference, subversion, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever,

Mindful of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on the principle of non-interference and non-intervention , in particular the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, of 24 October 1970, as well as the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States, of 9 December 1981,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

Relations between the High Contracting Parties shall be conducted in strict compliance with the principle of non-interference and non-intervention by States in the affairs of other States.

Article II

For the purpose of implementing the principle of non-interference and non-intervention each High Contracting Party undertakes to comply with the following obligations:

(1) to respect the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, security and non-alignment of the other High Contracting Party, as well as the national identity and cultural heritage of its people;

(2) to respect the sovereign and inalienable right of the other High Contracting Party freele to determine its own political, economic, cultural and social systems, to develop its international relations and to exercise permanent sovereignty over its natural resources, in accordance with the will of its people, and without outside intervention, interference, subversion, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever;

(3) to refrain from the threat or use of force in any form whatsoever so as not to violate the boundaries of each other, to disrupt the political, social or economic order of the other High Contracting Party, to overthrow or change the political system of the other High Contracting Party or its Government, or to cause tension between the High Contracting Parties;

(4) to ensure that its territory is not used in any manner which would violate the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity or disrupt the political, economic and social stability of the other High Contracting Party;

(5) to refrain from armed intervention, subversion, military occupation or any other form of intervention and interference, overt or covert, directed at the other High Contracting Party, or any act of military, political or economic interference in the internal affairs of the other High Contracting Party, including acts of reprisal involving the use of force;

(6) to refrain from any action or attempt in whatever form or under whatever pretext to destabilize or to undermine the stability of the other High Contracting Party or any of its institutions;

(7) to refrain from the promotion, encouragement or support, direct or indirect, of rebellious or secessionist activities against the other High Contracting Party, under any pretext whatsoever, or from any other action which seeks to disrupt the unity or to undermine or subvert the political order of the other High Contracting Party;

(8) to prevent within its territory the training, equipping, financing and recruitment of mercenaries from whatever origin for the purpose of hostile activities against the other High Contracting Party, or the sending of such mercenaries into the territory of the other High Contracting Party and accordingly to deny facilities, including financing for the training, equipping and transit of such mercenaries;

(9) to refrain from making any agreements or arrangements with other States designed to intervene or interfere in the internal and external affairs of the other High Contracting Party;

(10) to abstain from any defamatory campaign, vilification or hostile propa-

ganda for the purpose of intervening or interfering in the internal affairs of the other High Contracting Party;

(11) to prevent any assistance to or use of or tolerence of terrorist groups, saboteurs or subversive agents aginst the other High Contracting Party;

(12) to prevent within its territory the presence, harbouring, in camps and bases or otherwise, organizing, training, financing, equipping and arming of individuals and political, ethnic and any other groups for the purpose of creating subversion, disorder or unrest in the territory of the other High Contracting Party and accordingly also to prevent the use of mass media and the transportation of arms, ammunition and equipment by such individuals and groups;

(13) not to resort to or allow any other action that could be considered as interference or intervention.

Article III

The present Agreement shall enter into force on 15 May 1988.

Article IV

Any steps that may be required in order to enable the High Contracting Parties to comply with the provisions of Article II of this Agreement shall be completed by the date on which this Agreement enters into force.

Article V

This Agreement is drawn up in the English, Pashtu and Urdu languages, all texts being equally authenic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

Done in five original copies at Geneva this fourteenth day of April 1988.*

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
ABDUL WAKIL
[Minister of Foreign Affairs]

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
ZAIN NOORANI
[Minister of State for Foreign Affairs]

Declaration on International Guarantees

The Governments of the United States of America and of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

*Separate signature pages were used for this instrument.

Expressing support that the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have concluded a negotiated political settlement designed to normalize relations and promote good-neighbourliness between the two countries as well as to strengthen international peace and security in the region;

Wishing in turn to contribute to the achievement of the objectives that the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have set themselves, and with a view to ensuring respect for their sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment;

Undertake to invariably refrain from any form of interference and intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to respect the commitments contained in the bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-Interference and Non-Intervention;

Urge all States to act likewise.

The present Declaration shall enter into force on 15 May 1988.

Done at Geneva, this fourteenth day of April 1988 in five original copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authenic.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GEORGE P. SHULTZ

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE

Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Voluntary Return of Refugees

The Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, hereinafter referred to as the High Contracting Parties,

Desiring to normalize relations and promote good-neighbourliness and co-operation as well as to strengthen international peace and security in the region,

Convinced that voluntary and unimpeded repatriation constitutes the most appropriate solution for the problem of Afghan refugees present in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and having ascertained that the arrangements for the return of the Afghan refugees are satisfactory to them,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

All Afghan refugees temporarily present in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall be given the opportunity to return voluntarily to their homeland in accordance with the arrangements and conditions set out in the present Agreement.

Article II

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan shall take all necessary measures to ensure the following conditions for the voluntary return of Afghan refugees to their homeland:

(a) All refugees shall be allowed to return in freedom to their homeland;

(b) All returnees shall enjoy the free choice of domicile and freedom of movement within the Republic of Afghanistan;

(c) All returnees shall enjoy the right to work, to adequate living conditions and to share in the welfare of the State;

(d) All returnees shall enjoy the right to participate on an equal basis in the civic affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan, They shall be ensured equal benefits from the solution of the land question on the basis of the Land and Water Reform;

(e) All returnees shall enjoy the same rights and privileges, including freedom of religion, and have the same obligations and responsibilities as any other citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan without discrimination.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan undertakes to implement these measures and to provide, within its possibilities, all necessary assistance in the process of repatriation.

Article III

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall facilitate the voluntary, orderly and peaceful repatriation of all Afghan refugees staying within its territory and undertakes to provide, within its possibilities, all necessary assistance in the process of repatriation.

Article IV

For the purpose of organising, coordinating and supervising the operations which should effect the voluntary, orderly and peaceful repatriation of Afghan refugees, there shall be set up mixed commissions in accordance with the established international practice. For the performance of their functions the members of the commissions and their staff shall be accorded the necessary facilities, and have access to the relevant areas within the territories of the High Contracting Parties.

Article V

With a view to the orderly movement of the returnees, the commission shall determine frontier crossing points and establish necessary transit centres. They shall also establish all other modalities for the phased return of refugees, including registration and communication to the country of return of the names of refugees who express the wish to return.

Article VI

At the request of the Governments concerned, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will cooperate and provide assistance in the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees in accordance with the present Agreement. Special agreements may be concluded for this purpose between UNHCR and the High Contracting Parties.

Article VII

The present Agreement shall enter into force on 15 May 1988. At that time the mixed commissions provided in Article IV shall be established and the operations for the voluntary return of refugees under this Agreement shall commence.

The arrangements set out in Articles IV and V above shall remain in effect for a period of eighteen months. After that period the High Contracting Parties shall review the results of the repatriation and, if necessary, consider any further arrangements that may be called for.

Article VIII

This Agreement is drawn up in the English, Pashtu, and Urdu languages, all texts being equally authenic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

Done in five original copies at Geneva this fourteenth day of April 1988.*

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
ABDUL WAKIL

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
ZAIN NOORANI

Agreement on the Interrelationships for the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan

1. The diplomatic process initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the support of all Governments concerned and aimed at achieving, through negotiations, a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan has been successfully brought to an end.

2. Having agreed to work towards a comprehensive settlement designed to resolve the various issues involved and to establish a framework for good-neighbourliness and co-operation, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan entered into

*Separate signature pages were used for this instrument.

negotiations through the intermediary of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General at Geneva from 16 to 24 June 1982. Following consultations held by the Personal Representative in Islamabad, Kabul and Teheran from 21 January to 7 February 1983, the negotiations continued at Geneva from 11 to 22 April and from 12 to 24 June 1983. The Personal Representative again visited the area for high level discussions from 3 to 15 April 1984. It was then agreed to change the format of the negotiations and, in pursuance thereof, proximity talks through the intermediary of the Personal Representative were held at Geneva from 24 to 30 August 1984. Another visit to the area by the Personal Representative from 25 to 31 May 1985 preceded further rounds of proximity talks held at Geneva from 20 to 25 June, from 27 to 30 August and from 16 to 19 December 1985. The Personal Representative paid an additional visit to the area from 8 to 18 March 1986 for consultations. The final round of negotiations began as proximity talks at Geneva on 5 May 1986, was suspended on 23 May 1986, and was resumed from 31 July to 8 August 1986. The personal Representative visited the area from 20 November to 3 December 1986 for further consultations and the talks at Geneva were resumed again from 25 February to 9 March 1987, and from 7 to 11 September 1987. The Personal Representative again visited the area from 18 January to 9 February 1988 and the talks resumed at Geneva from 2 March to 8 April 1988. The format of the negotiations was changed on 14 April 1988, when the instruments comprising the settlement were finalized, and, accordingly, direct talks were held at that stage. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was kept informed of the progress of the negotiations throughout the diplomatic process.

3. The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan took part in the negotiations with the expressed conviction that they were acting in accordance with their rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and agreed that the political settlement should be based on the following principles of international law:

- The principle that States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations;
- The principle that States shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered;
- The duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;
- The duty of States to co-operate with one another in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;
- The principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;
- The principle of sovereign equality of States;
- The principle that States shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The two Governments further affirmed the right of the Afghan refugees to return to their homeland in a voluntary and unimpeded manner.

4. The following instruments were concluded on this date as component parts of the political settlement:

A Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-interference and Non-intervention;

A Declaration on International Guarantees by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

A Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Voluntary Return of Refugees;

The present Agreement on the Interrelationships for the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan.

5. The Bilateral Agreement on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-interference and Non-intervention; the Declaration on International Guarantees; the Bilateral Agreement on the Voluntary Return of Refugees; and the present Agreement on the Interrelationships for the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan will enter into force on 15 May 1988. In accordance with the timeframe agreed upon between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics there will be a phased withdrawal of the foreign troops which will start on the date of entry into force mentioned above. One half of the troops will be withdrawn by 15 August 1988 and the withdrawal of all troops will be completed within nine months.

6. The interrelationships in paragraph 5 above have been agreed upon in order to achieve effectively the purpose of the political settlement, namely, that as from 15 May 1988, there will be no interference and intervention in any form in the affairs of the Parties; the international guarantees will be in operation; the voluntary return of the refugees to their homeland will start and be completed within the timeframe specified in the agreement on the voluntary return of the refugees; and the phased withdrawal of the foreign troops will start and be completed within the timeframe envisaged in paragraph 5. It is therefore essential that all the obligations deriving from the instruments concluded as component parts of the settlement be strictly fulfilled and that all the steps required to ensure full compliance with all the provisions of the instruments be completed in good faith,

7. To consider alleged violations and to work out prompt and mutually satisfactory solutions to questions that may arise in the implementation of the instruments comprising the settlement, representatives of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall meet whenever required.

A representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall lend his good offices to the Parties and in that context he will assist in the organization of the meetings and participate in them. He may submit to the Parties for their consideration and approval suggestions and recommendations for prompt, faithful and complete observance of the provisions of the instruments.

In order to enable him to fulfill his tasks, the representative shall be assisted by such personnel under his authority as required. On his own initiative, or at the request of any of the Parties, the personnel shall investigate any possible violations of any of the provisions of the instruments and prepare a report

thereon. For that purpose, the representative and his personnel shall receive all the necessary co-operation from the Parties, including all freedom of movement within their respective territories required for effective investigation. Any report submitted by the representative to the two Governments shall be considered in a meeting of the Parties no later than forty-eight hours after it has been submitted.

The modalities and logistical arrangements for the work of the representative and the personnel under his authority as agreed upon with the Parties are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding which is annexed to and is part of this Agreement.

8. The present instrument will be registered with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It has been examined by the representatives of the Parties to the bilateral agreements and of the States-Guarantors, who have signified their consent with its provisions. The representatives of the Parties, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have affixed their signatures hereunder. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was present.

Done, at Geneva, this fourteenth day of April 1988, in five original copies each in the English, Pashtu, Urdu and Russian languages, all being equally authenic. In case of any dispute regarding the interpretation the English text shall prevail.*

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
ABDUL WAKIL

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
ZAIN NOORANI

In witness thereof, the representatives of the States-Guarantors affixed their signatures hereunder:

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GEORGE P. SHULTZ

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE

* Separate signature pages were used for this instrument.

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NOTES

OVERVIEW

1. George F. Kennan, "The G.O.P. Won the Cold War?: Ridiculous," *New York Times,* October 28, 1992, p. A21. See also "The Failure in our Success," *New York Times,* March 14, 1994. p. A23; and Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994).

2. Moshe Lewin, in *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), presents a bibliography of this literature (pp. 155–62). See also the discussion of "institutional pluralism" in Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How The Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), and the analyses of bureaucratic interest groups in the work of H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths.

3. Martin Walker, *The Waking Giant: Gorbachev's Russia,* New York: Pantheon, 1986), pp. xxi, xxv, 175.

4. For example, Charles G. Cogan, "Partners In Time: The C.I.A. and Afghanistan," *World Policy Journal* (Summer 1993), p. 81.

5. For example, see Raymond L. Garthoff, "Why Did The Cold War Arise, and Why Did It End?," *International Affairs* (Moscow), (April–May 1992), pp. 119–20.

CHAPTER 1

1. Abdul Samad Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), p. 107.

2. *Istoriia Vooruzhennykh Sil Afghanistana: 1747–1977* [The history of the armed forces of Afghanistan: 1747–1977], Akademia Nauk SSSR; [Institute of Oriental Studies]), (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1985), pp. 159–69.

3. Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown, 1982); esp. pp. 675–77, 687, 1261.

4. William H. Lewis and Michael Ledeen, *Debacle: The American Failure in Iran* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 55. Lewis, who helped to direct these programs as Director of Political-Military Affairs in the State Department, discussed them in general terms in an interview.

5. General Nasrullah Babar, who directed this program, described it in an interview in Islamabad, October 9, 1990. For a history of Pakistani involvement in Afghanistan, see M. B. Naqvi, "The Great Gamble," *The Herald* (Karachi), (June 1988), pp. 17–22.

6. Interview, Moscow, March 4, 1993. Vladimir Kuzichkin, a KGB major who defected in 1982, described KGB attitudes toward Karmal and Amin in an article in *Time* ("Coups and Killings in Kabul," Nov. 22, 1982, pp. 33–34). He said that Karmal had been a KGB agent "for many years" prior to his installation as president of the Communist regime in 1980.

7. Yuri Gankovsky, Vladimir Bondarevsky, and Alexander Morozov were the principal sources.

8. Interview, Moscow, March 4, 1993. See also "Our Man in Kabul," a series of four articles by Morozov, *New Times* (Moscow), September 24, October 1, October 14, and October 21, 1991.

9. Viktor Suvorov, *Inside Soviet Military Intelligence* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), p. xiv.

10. Ibid., pp. 54–55.

11. Ibid., p. 96. See also H. F. Scott and William Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), for a discussion of the GRU.

12. "How the C.I.A. Turns Foreign Students into Traitors," *Ramparts* 5, no. 10 (April 1967), p. 22. Karmal cited this article in an interview in *New Delhi* (April 27, 1981), p. 10. See also Sol Stern, "A Short Account of International Student Politics and the Cold War," *Ramparts* 7, no. 10 (Jan. 25, 1969), pp. 87–97.

13. Interview, Washington, D.C., April 10, 1980.

14. Interview, Teheran, January 25, 1977.

15. Interview, Kabul, February 10, 1977.

16. Interview, Kabul, February 9, 1977.

17. Puzanov was interviewed by David Gai in "Afghanistan: Kak Eto Bylo—Voina Glazami Ee-Uchastnikov" [Afghanistan: the way it was—the war through the eyes of its participants], *Vecherniaia Moskva* [Evening Moscow], July 26, 1989, p. 4.

18. Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan,* pp. 174–79.

19. FBIS, NC062140Y, April 6, 1978, Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic, 2100 GMT.

20. *Asian Recorder,* 26 March–1 April, 1978, 14237.

21. Interview, Kabul, April 1, 1984.

22. Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan,* p. 148.

23. Sayed Naqvi, "The Coup in Kabul: What Really Happened," *Indian Express* (New Delhi), May 15, 1978, p. 3.

24. Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan,* pp. 194–95.

25. A minority view is that the KGB, attempting to sow confusion, masterminded the murder in preparation for the coup (e.g., see Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy toward Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: Praeger, 1982], p. 151). This theory ignores the crucial fact that the Parcham leaders had long been the KGB's principal intelligence assets in Kabul.

26. Noor Mohammed Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, and Babrak Karmal have all referred to August (*Kabul Times,* May 3, 1978, and *The New Kabul Times,* Jan. 8, 1980).

27. This is accepted in such diverse sources as the official history of the coup, *On the Saur Revolution,* Political Department, Armed Forces of Afghanistan (Kabul: Government Printing Press), May 22, 1978; Louis Dupree, *The Accidental Coup,* Part II (Hanover, N.H.: American Universities Field Staff Reports, 1979/45), p. 5; and Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan* (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 94–95.

28. Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan,* p. 197.

29. Henry Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press Policy Studies, 1983), p. 75, citing unidentified Afghan sources.

30. Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* p. 95, citing Khalq sources, says that Amin was not imprisoned until the evening of April 26.

31. *On the Saur Revolution.*

32. Part II of this report presents his direct account of the coup.

33. Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* p. 95.

34. Dupree, *The Accidental Coup,* p. 5.

35. Ibid., p. 8.

36. Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* p. 103.

37. Interview, Moscow, March 4, 1993.

38. "Our Man in Kabul," September 24, 1991, p. 38.

39. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985), p. 897.

40. Vadim Zagladin, who was First Deputy Director of the International Department of the Communist Party Central Committee at the time, was the most important of these sources.

41. Karmal gave this account to S. K. Singh, who became Indian Ambassador in Kabul shortly after the coup and who told the author of this conversation during a visit to the Afghan capital on August 14, 1978.

42. Ibid. The Soviet preference for a "national democratic" regime at this stage was spelled out in R. A. Ulyanovsky, "On Socialism-Oriented Countries," *Kommunist,* no. 7, July 1979.

43. Vladimir Snegirev, "The Coup Was Not the First in Krychkov's Biography," *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* October 10, 1991, p. 7.

44. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy,* p. 152.

45. Tass, May 19, 1978, in FBIS/SU, May 19, 1978, p. J1.

46. Amdreas Kohlschutter, "Afghan Drama," *Die Zeit,* January 11, 1980, p. 4, reporting an interview in July 1979.

47. *On the Saur Revolution.*

48. "Our Man in Kabul, September 24, 1991, p. 39.

49. Raja Anwar, in *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* pp. 119–21, cites both Khalq and Parcham sources that corroborate these charges and point to Karmal's role in planning the coup before his departure.

50. Vladimir Plastun, an Afghan specialist at the Institute of Oriental Studies, relates first-hand evidence that Karmal arrived in Moscow in October and was living there in early December 1979. Karmal himself has stated that he came to Kabul in October.

51. Beverly Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan: A Reappraisal* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

52. Estimates of the number of prisoners in Pul-i-charki ranged from Amin's figure of "about 1,000" (in an interview with *Corriere Della Serra* [Milan], July 3, 1979) to claims of 17,000 made by insurgent groups. Amnesty International, complaining of a lack of cooperation from the Afghan government, cited resistance sources as the basis for its much-quoted estimate of 12,000. My own interviews suggested that indiscriminate torture and executions occurred among a prison population not exceeding 4,000.

53. Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 384.

54. Declassified U.S. State Department Memorandum, April 30, 1978.

55. Louis Dupree, *Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush,* Part V, (Hanover, N.H.: American Universities Field Staff, LD-4/1980), p. 4.

56. Interview, Washington, D.C., April 3, 1989.

57. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), p. 73.

58. May 20, 1981, in Washington, D.C.

59. Peter Niesewand, "Guerrillas Train in Pakistan to Oust Afghan Government," *Washington Post,* February 2, 1979, p. A23.

60. Interview, Moscow, April 3, 1989.

61. "Congressional Presentation for Fiscal 1979, IMET," Security Assistance Program, Defense Security Agency, January, 1979.

62. "Development and Military Assistance Programs in Afghanistan," statement by the White House Press Secretary, February 22, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 15 (Feb. 26, 1979), p. 310.

63. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation,* p. 920.

64. *Kabul Times,* September 23, 1979.

65. State Department, *The Kidnapping and Death of Ambassador Adolph Dubs: Summary Report of an Investigation* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980.

66. *Kabul Times,* September 23, 1979.

67. U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Telegram 7062, September 21, 1979, reports that Afghan officials told the Embassy following Amin's assumption of the presidency that "among specific measures he is considering is an official letter of apology over the death of Ambassador Dubs." This cable was revealed in *Asnade lane-ye jasus* [Documents of the nest of spies], a compilation of documents obtained from the U.S. Embassy in Teheran when the hostages were seized, no. 30, p. 83.

68. The most significant of these emissaries was Vasily Safronchuk, who has partially described his role in "Afghanistan in The Taraki Period" and "Afghanistan in the Amin Period," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (January–February 1991).

69. Interview, Moscow, April 3, 1989.

70. *Zasedaniye Politburo TsK KPSS* [Session of the Politburo of the C.C.C.P.S.U.], "On the Aggravating Situation in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and our Possible Measures," March 17–19, 1979. Top Secret: Single Working Copy. (Selected archival records were made available to the special court that prosecuted participants in the August 1991 coup against the regime of Mikhail Gorbachev. The author is indebted to Vladimir Grossman, editor of the *Journal of History,* for obtaining and arranging the translation of archival materials.)

71. *Zapis' Besedy, A. N. Kosygina, A. A. Gromyko, D. F. Ustinova, B. N. Ponomareva s N. M. Taraki* [Record of the Discussions of A. N. Kosygin, A. A. Gromyko, D. F. Ustinov, B. N. Ponomarev with N. M. Taraki], March 20, 1979. Top Secret. Special File, General Department, First Section, Central Committee, C.P.S.V., No. P499.

72. Many Western observers concluded that Soviet crews operated the gunships (e.g., Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union,* p. 102). However, the GRU chief then in Kabul, Lt. Gen. L. S. Gorelov, states that Moscow rejected a request from Amin on April 14 for secret Soviet crews. See Lt. Col. A. Oliynik, "Vvod Voisk v Afghanistan: Rasskazyvraiut Uchastniki Sobytii Svidetel' stvuiut Dokymenty Kak Prinimolos Reshenie" [The sending of troops to Afghanistan: participants in the events tell and documents attest to how the decision was made], *Krasnaya Zvezda,* Nov. 18, 1989, pp. 3–4.

73. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle,* p. 427. Charles C. Cogan writes that President Carter signed a finding authorizing propaganda and medical aid in July 1979 ("Partners in Time: The C.I.A. and Afghanistan," *World Policy Journal* [Summer 1993], p. 76).

74. Department of State Cable 266505, October 11, 1979, and U.S. Embassy, Jidda, Cable 7548, October 6, 1979, in *Asnad-e- lane-ye jasus* [Documents of the nest of

spies], no. 30, pp. 114, 142–43, review the development of the aid program from the beginning of the year.

75. U.S. Embassy, Islamabad, Cable 5531, May 14, 1979, in ibid., No. 29, pp. 99–101. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle,* p. 429, refers to "further enhancing" U.S. aid to Saudi Arabia and Egypt in December 1979. See also a memoir by Zalmay Khalilzad, former Special Assistant on Afghanistan to the Undersecretary of State, "The United States and the War in Afghanistan," unpublished, pp. 7, 9.

76. American Embassy, Kabul, Cable 4088, June 25, 1979; Cable 5479, July 18, 1979, and Cable 5470, July 19, 1979, in *Asnad-e lane-ye jasus* [Documents of the nest of spies], no. 29, pp. 127–33, 179–95.

77. In an interview in New York on March 10, 1989, Vasily Safronchuk told the author of Amin's insistence that Afghanistan was already a "democratic people's state" like Cuba and Vietnam, rejecting Soviet advice that it was a "national democratic" state like Ethiopia and Yemen. This is elaborated in Safronchuk's account of his 1978–1979 mission to Kabul as "counselor-envoy" in the Soviet Embassy ("Afghanistan in the Taraki Period, pp. 88–91).

78. Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* p. 165.

79. For example, see "H. Amin's Address to the Charmang and Bajaur People," *Kabul Times,* August 5, 1979; "H. Amin: This is a Revolution Which Handed Power from One Strata to the Other," *Kabul Times,* August 21, 1979; and "Spongers, Oppressors Have No Power Now in Afghanistan," *Kabul Times,* September 20, 1979.

80. "Saur Revolution an Example for All," *Kabul Times,* December 18, 1979, p. 2.

81. Oliynik, *Krasnaya Zvezda.*

82. Ibid.

83. Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan,* p. 167.

84. Ibid., p. 175.

85. Ibid., p. 171.

86. Safronchuk, "Afghanistan in the Amin Period," p. 85–86. For a Soviet account implying that Andropov might have told Taraki to kill Amin, if necessary, see Alexander Morozov, "Our Man in Kabul," *New Times* (Moscow), October 15, 1991, p. 32.

87. Morozov, "Our Man in Kabul," pp. 33–34. In this account, the KGB agent who gave them sanctuary, Vladimir Ilyin, did not have the prior approval of his superiors to do so.

88. Safronchuk, "Afghanistan in the Amin Period," pp. 89–90. Ironically, Safronchuk confirms that Puzanov did persuade Amin to come to the meeting. See also the *Economist,* November 3, 1979, p. 11. East-bloc diplomats were quoted in telegrams 7444 and 7784, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, October 11 and 30, 1979, and U.S. Embassy, Ankara, 07965, October 20, in *Asnad-e lane-ye jasus* [Documents of the nest of spies], no. 29, p. 121.

89. Igor Belyaev, "Tak my Voshli v Afghanistan" [Thus we entered Afghanistan], a dialogue with Anatolii Gromyko, *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* no. 38 (5260) (Sept. 28, 1989), pp. 20–26.

90. *The Observer,* London, April 2, 1989, p. 1.

91. Gai, "Afghanistan," p. 21. Alexander Morozov of the KGB corroborates Zaplatin's account in "Our Man In Kabul," October 15, p. 34.

92. Ibid. See also Oliynik, *Krasnaya Zveda.*

93. See Pavlovskiy's interview in *Literaturnaia Gazeta,* Sept. 20, 1989.

94. Interview with retired KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin, *Moscow News,* May 24, 1990, p. 1.

95. Interview, New Delhi, India, Nov. 10, 1981.

96. Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, Institute of Diplomatic Studies, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University.

97. Interview, New Delhi.

98. U.S. Embassy, Islamabad, Telegram No. 12425, Oct. 31, 1979, *Asnad-e lane-ye jasus* [Documents of the nest of spies), no. 29, p. 129.

99. "Did the U.S. Miss a Cry from Afghanistan?," a letter to the *New York Times,* January 9, 1980, p. A22. For the full text of the interview, see *Kabul Times,* November 25, 1979, pp. 1–3.

100. Interview, Islamabad, October 5, 1988.

101. Moscow denied Soviet involvement in the death of Amin throughout the Afghan war. However, Yuri Gankovsky, former Director of Near East and South Asian Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, has cited first-hand accounts of the Soviet role in conversations with me and in an interview with *Izvestia,* May 4, 1989, reproduced in English in *Novosty Press Agency Daily Review* 35, no. 85, May 5, 1989, Part II. See also an interview with Nikolai Berlen, a KGB participant in the attack on Amin's palace, in Michael Dobbs, "Secret Memos Trace Kremlin's March to War," *Washington Post,* November 15, 1992, p. A32.

102. Morozov, "Our Man in Kabul," October 15, 1991, p. 33, describes a memo submitted on September 14, 1979, to station chief Ivanov listing 10 alleged Amin meetings with CIA agents, complete with names and places.

103. Transcript of Kalugin interview with *Washington Post* reporters, January 19, 1992.

104. Interview, Moscow, March 5, 1989.

105. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation,* p. 923.

106. "What They Have Concealed from Us: the Truth about the Afghan War Disclosed from the Supersecret 'Special File,'" *Trud* (Labor), July 26, 1992, cited in Raymond Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation, rev. ed.,* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994), p. 1011.

107. Georgy Arbatov, *The System* (New York: Random House, 1992), pp. 199–200.

108. In a Moscow interview, March 10, 1989, Nodari Simoniya, Deputy Director of the Institute of World Economy and Politics, recalled this account by an unnamed KGB friend.

109. Interview, Moscow, March 9, 1989. Stevens died in 1990. Married to a Russian, he developed unusual access to Kosygin and other high Soviet sources during his long Moscow tenure.

110. *Krasnaya Zvezda,* Moscow, December 25, 1992.

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112. *Ogonyok,* no. 12, March, 1989, p. 15.

113. Quoted in Artyom Borovik, *The Hidden War* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990), p. 8.

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120. Y. V. Andropov, D. F. Ustinov, A. A. Gromyko, A. I. Pelshe, M. A. Sustov, U. N. Grishin, A. P. Kirilenko, K. U. Chernenko, N. A. Tikhonov.

121. D. A. Kunayev, V. U. Scherbitsky, and G. V. Romanov.

122. Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 26.

123. *Postanovleniye TsK KPSS* [Resolution of the C.C. C.P.S.U.]. Top Secret/ Special File, "Kpolozheniyu v 'A,'" [On the Situation In "A"], no. 997-op (15), P176/125, December 12, 1979. This document was found by Soviet officials searching the Central Committee Archives for evidence relevant to the Constitutional Court trial of accused conspirators in the 1991 coup that resulted in the fall of Mikhail Gorbachev (Perechen 14, Document 31, in Record Group "Fond 89" in the Storage Center for Contemporary Documentation, Moscow). Raymond Garthoff argues that only Brezhnev, Chernenko, Ustinov, Gromyko, and Andropov attended the meeting (*Detente and Confrontation,* rev. ed. [1994], p. 1016).

124. Yuri Gankovsky, Director of the Afghanistan Project, Institute of Oriental Studies.

125. The *Observer,* London, April 2, 1989, p. 1.

126. Alexandrov-Agentov gave this account to R. A. Ulyanovsky.

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CHAPTER 2

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20. Major Nasrullah Safi, "The Different Stages of Afghanistan's Jehad," *Journal of the Writer's Union of Free Afghanistan* (Peshawar, Pakistan) 3, no. 1 (January-March 1988), esp. p. 89.

21. Mark L. Urban, *War in Afghanistan* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 63.

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47. Former Undersecretary of State David Newsom, interviewed in Washington, D.C., March 10, 1990.

48. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987, p. 79.

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54. Confidential cable from the U.S. Defense Attaché, Kabul, to the Defense Intelligence Agency, June 2, 1980 (Document 00960 in the National Security Archives Document Set on Afghanistan).

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56. Mark Urban, *War in Afghanistan,* p. 86.

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3. The text of the May proposals was published in U.N. document A/35/238–S/13951, dated May 19, 1980.

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6. The text of the proposal of the European Community that I have is set out in an unofficial note issued by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations.

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16. *Problemy Mira i Sotsializma,* no. 12, December, 1982, cited in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition,* vol. 1 (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 230.
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26. Interview, Islamabad, November 25, 1991.
27. Riaz Mohammed Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 117.
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38. Interview, Washington, D.C., March 12, 1991.
39. Interview, Boston, April 15, 1991.
40. Interview, May 22, 1990, by telephone.
41. Interview, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1991.
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43. Interview, Washington, D.C., September 16, 1991.
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21. Ibid., p. 136.

22. Ibid., p. 3.

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24. Ibid., p. 105.
25. The National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, *Narcotics Intelligence Estimate,* 1984, p. 46 (National Security Archive).
26. Yousaf and Atkin, *Bear Trap,* pp. 210–11.
27. For example, see Arif Nizami, "The Emergence of the Afghanistan Problem in the South Asian Seminar," *Nawa-e-Waqt,* (Lahore), Feb. 18, 1984, p. 1; Nazir Naji, "The South Asian Seminar," *Jang* (Lahore), Feb. 12, 1984, p. 1; and "Zulfiqar Stresses Urgency of Afghan Settlement," *The Muslim* (Islamabad), Nov. 22, 1984, p. 6. See also Zulfiqar Ali Khan, "Afghanistan: Quest for a Settlement," *The Muslim,* March 15, 1984, p. 10.
28. This position was first expressed in "Afghanistan: Time for Direct Talks," *The Muslim,* July 2, 1982, p. 6. It was reaffirmed throughout the war and elaborated in numerous articles by editor Mushahid Hussain.
29. For example, see the four-part series "Pakistan's Afghan Predicament," *The Muslim* (Islamabad), February 5, February 6, February 8, and February 10, 1984.
30. "The Afghanistan Crisis," an address at a conference at Villanova University, Philadelphia, December 7, 1984. See also "Pakistan's Threat Perception and Diplomatic Options," an address at a Joint Staff Services Seminar, Rawalpindi, Jan. 28, 1984.
31. The Hezbe Islami, a major recipient of ISI aid, was often depicted during the war as a Pushtun group. However, while its leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and many of its adherents speak Pushtu, they are detribalized Pushtuns from non-Pushtun areas of northern Afghanistan who no longer have links with the Pushtun tribal structure and have rejected Pushtun nationalist aims. When the Najibullah government was ousted in 1992, the Hezbe Islami allied with Pushtun elements in the Khalq faction of the defunct People's Democratic Party and attempted to lay claim to the leadership of Pushtun interests in opposition to the Tajik-dominated Jamaat Islami, a claim initially rejected by Pushtun tribal leaders.
32. "A Short Walk in Afghanistan," July 14, 1984, pp. 38–39.
33. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot,* p. 76.
34. Interview, Washington, D.C., January 21, 1994.
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4. *Gorbachev: Heretic in the Kremlin* Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 55.
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15. "Gorbachev may seek way out of stalemate," *Times,* (London), April 30, 1985.

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